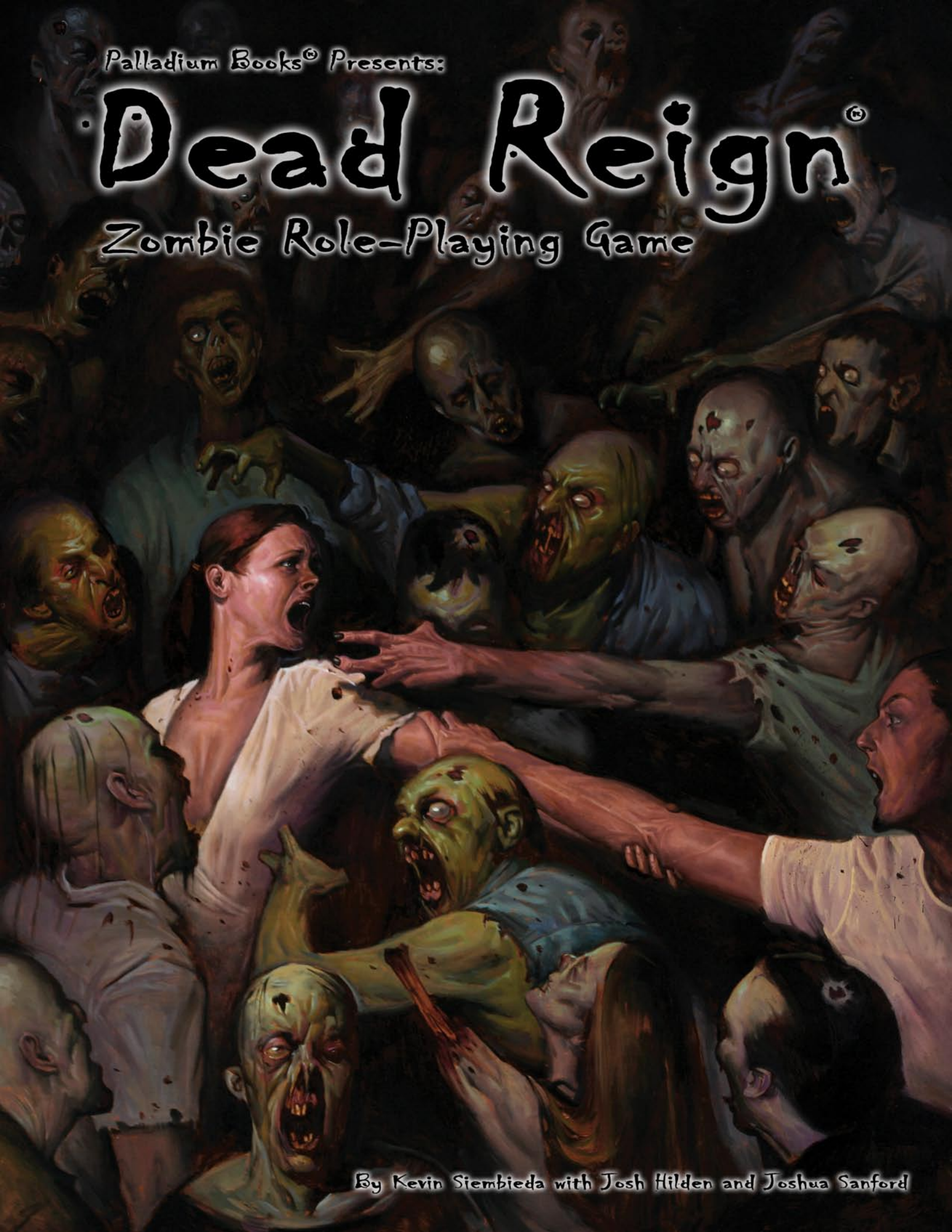


Palladium Books® Presents:

# Dead Reign®

Zombie Role-Playing Game



By Kevin Siembieda with Josh Hilden and Joshua Sanford

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# Warning!

## Horror, Violence, Zombies & the Supernatural

The *fictional* world of **Dead Reign®** contains subject matter that deals with the supernatural, death cults, zombies, conspiracy theories, the paranormal, magic, war and extreme violence.

The setting is our modern world taken over by the walking dead – zombies. Hideous animated corpses that feed upon the living. The heroes are ordinary people who battle for their own survival and to reclaim the world from the dead. Human civilization has collapsed, our cities and towns are infested with zombies, madmen and cultists.

*Some parents* may find the subject matter, violence, magic and supernatural elements of the game inappropriate for young readers/players. Furthermore, the realistic manner in which the fictional horror material is presented *may* be disturbing for some young readers.

*WE STRONGLY SUGGEST PARENTAL DISCRETION.*

Please note that none of us at Palladium Books® condone or encourage the occult, the practice of magic, the use of drugs, vigilantism or violence.

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**Dead Reign®** is a complete role-playing game.

## Dedications

Thanks to Hilden, for letting me help get his dream project off the ground and into print, and to Kevin Siembieda, for giving me this opportunity to be published. I'd also like to acknowledge the fine people on the Palladium Books message board and chat room, who provided invaluable advice and input on this project. You know who you are, and you have my thanks!

– Joshua Sanford, 2008

This book is dedicated to my wife Karen, you are my light and my inspiration. And to Joshua Sanford, my good right arm. And special thanks to Kevin Siembieda who believed in this.

– Josh Hilden, 2008

To George Romero, father of the modern zombie, and all the people who love the zombie genre so much. This one is for you.

– Kevin Siembieda, 2008

**The cover**, by *E.M. Gist*, depicts zombies converging on a husband and wife being pulled apart, and about to be slain. A short while after their death, they too will rise as zombies.

### PDF Edition – September 2015

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**Palladium Books® Presents:**

# **Dead Reign®**

**The Zombie Apocalypse™**

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**Special Thanks to** *Josh Hilden* for coming up with the idea and title for *Dead Reign™* in the first place, *Joshua Sanford* for his ideas and contributions, *Nick Bradshaw* for his gruesome but wonderful zombie artwork as well as his ideas and input, *Amy L. Ashbaugh* for zombie artwork with a touch of humanity, *Mark Dudley* and *Mike Mumah* for their artistry, *Doug Lamberson*, *Shawn Hall*, *John Cooney*, *Jeff Hansen*, *Carmen Bellaire* and others who let me use them as a sounding board for my ideas. And to the heroes who help keep Palladium running every single day since its own apocalyptic crisis a few years back, *Alex*, *Wayne*, *Kathy*, *Julius*, *Jason*, and *Hank*.

– *Kevin Zombieda, 2008*

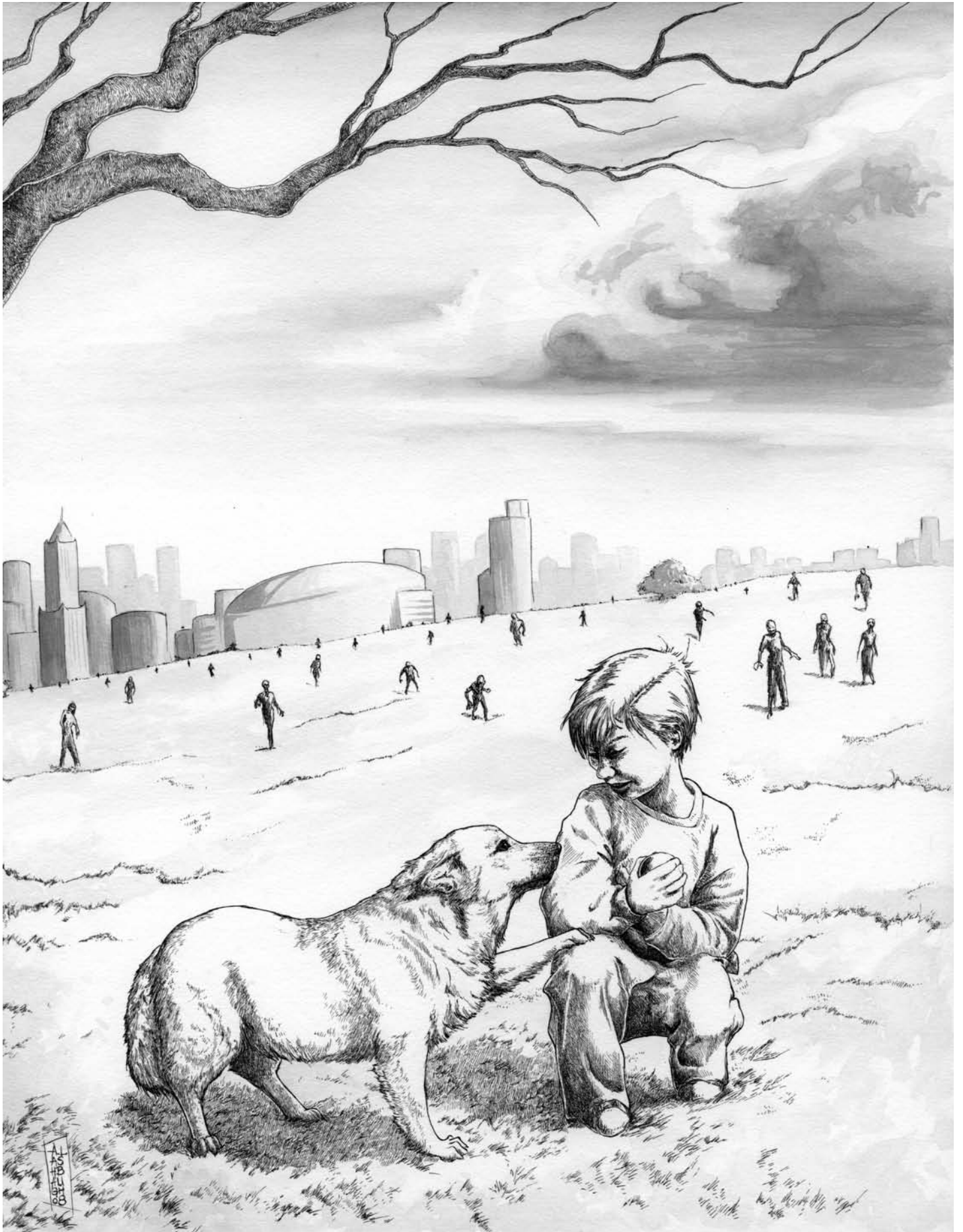
# Contents

<b>The Wave</b> . . . . .	7	<b>Zombie Speed</b> . . . . .	35
Who Dunit? . . . . .	7	<b>Zombie Senses</b> . . . . .	35
<b>The Zombie Apocalypse</b> . . . . .	8	Zombie Sense of Smell . . . . .	35
Still the first 24 hours . . . . .	10	Track Humans by Scent . . . . .	35
An example of becoming a zombie . . . . .	10	<b>Zombie Armor Rating (A.R. 14)</b> . . . . .	36
<b>Who I Am and Where We Are Today</b> . . . . .	12	<b>S.D.C. &amp; Zombies</b> . . . . .	36
The Reaper's Survival Guide . . . . .	12	Targeted Attacks . . . . .	36
According to rumor and speculation . . . . .	12	S.D.C. by Location . . . . .	36
Larger Cities . . . . .	12	Inflicting Damage to the Neck or Head . . . . .	37
Woods and remote areas . . . . .	13	Depleting the S.D.C. of the Main Body . . . . .	37
The Wave is over . . . . .	13	<b>Zombie Hit Points</b> . . . . .	37
Zombie Death Cults . . . . .	13	Recovering Hit Points & S.D.C. . . . .	38
<b>A Thump in the Night</b> . . . . .	13	<b>Zombie Descriptions</b> . . . . .	38
The Day the Dead Rose . . . . .	14	List of Zombie Types . . . . .	38
<b>The Dead Reign</b> . . . . .	17	Slouchers . . . . .	38
Cities & Towns, USA . . . . .	17	Crawlers . . . . .	40
Know Your Enemy . . . . .	17	Fast Attack Zombies . . . . .	43
Zombies 101 . . . . .	17	Flesh-Eating Zombie . . . . .	45
There is more to fear than zombies . . . . .	20	Thinkers . . . . .	47
Dog Packs . . . . .	20	Mock Zombies . . . . .	50
Vehicle Graveyards . . . . .	21	Pattern Zombies . . . . .	53
<b>Secrets of the Dead</b> . . . . .	22	Using these Zombies in Other Game Settings . . . . .	55
Zombies are always hungry . . . . .	23	<b>Fighting Zombies</b> . . . . .	56
Zombies & P.P.E. . . . .	23	Stop the Moan . . . . .	56
P.P.E. feeds zombies . . . . .	23	Staying Alive is Rule Number One . . . . .	57
P.P.E. heals and restores . . . . .	23	You don't have to kill a zombie to stop it . . . . .	57
After Feeding Zombies Remain Active . . . . .	24	Vital Zombie Combat Note . . . . .	57
Zombies See Life Energy/P.P.E. . . . .	24	Pin them to the wall . . . . .	58
Sensing Range . . . . .	25	Fire scares and kills zombies . . . . .	59
<b>How Zombies Hunt</b> . . . . .	25	<b>Other Menaces</b> . . . . .	60
The Zombie Moan . . . . .	25	Retro-Savages NPC Villain . . . . .	60
Range of the Moan . . . . .	26	Death Cults . . . . .	62
The Convergence . . . . .	26	Terror Cults . . . . .	62
Convergence Multiplier . . . . .	27	Random Terror Cult Leader Table . . . . .	63
Duration . . . . .	27	Death Cults . . . . .	64
An example of Convergence . . . . .	27	Sinister Secrets . . . . .	67
Zombies Go Dormant . . . . .	28	The New World Order . . . . .	67
When there is no food . . . . .	28	Death Priest NPC Villain . . . . .	68
You Must Die to Become a Zombie . . . . .	29	<b>Characters</b> . . . . .	70
The Myth that Won't Die . . . . .	29	The Half-Living O.C.C. . . . .	70
A Zombie's Bite is Dangerous . . . . .	30	Hound Master O.C.C. . . . .	72
Likelihood of Infection . . . . .	30	O.C.C. Special Abilities . . . . .	72
Infection Symptoms & Penalties . . . . .	31	Reaper O.C.C. . . . .	75
Save vs Disease/Poison . . . . .	32	O.C.C. Special Reaper Skills . . . . .	76
<b>Zombie Attributes</b> . . . . .	32	Reaper Tactics & Info . . . . .	77
Zombie Intelligence . . . . .	32	Scrounger O.C.C. . . . .	78
Seldom Use Weapons and Tools . . . . .	33	Shepherd of the Damned O.C.C. . . . .	80
Zombie Mental Endurance . . . . .	33	Soldier O.C.C. . . . .	82
Zombies fear fire . . . . .	33	M.O.S. Options . . . . .	83
Zombie Physical Strength . . . . .	34	Survivor O.C.C./Ordinary People . . . . .	85
Zombie Physical Endurance . . . . .	34	Available Survivor Occupations Table . . . . .	86
Extreme Cold Temperatures . . . . .	34	Survivor Occupation Descriptions . . . . .	87
Weapon Damage . . . . .	34	<b>Notable Resources</b> . . . . .	97
		Abandoned Vehicles . . . . .	97

Oases in the City	101
Pharmacies	103
Big City Resources – Go Up	104
Rural Communities	105
Safe Haven Communities	106
<b>Weapons &amp; Equipment</b>	<b>107</b>
Commercial Firearms	107
Shotguns	109
Explosives	111
Incendiary Weapons	112
Crossbows	113
Blunt Weapons	114
Blade Weapons	115
Body Armor	117
<b>Transportation</b>	<b>121</b>
Motorcycles	121
Other Vehicles	125
<b>Adventure Ideas</b>	<b>127</b>
101 Random Scenarios, Encounters & Settings	127
Safe Haven Communities	140
Random Zombie Encounters	141
100 Random Corpse Searches	142
<b>Game Rules</b>	<b>144</b>
How to Role-Play	144
<b>Character Creation</b>	<b>146</b>
Step One: The Eight Attributes	146
Attribute Bonus Chart	147
Step Two: Understanding Damage Ratings	148
Armor Rating	148
S.D.C. & Hit Points	149
Recovery from Physical Injury	150
Surviving Coma and Death	150
Step Three: Choosing an Occupation & Skills	150
Step Four: Picking an Alignment	151
Step Five: Character Advancement	155
Experience Point Award Table	157
O.C.C. Experience Tables	158
Character Experience Levels	158
<b>Quick Character Creation</b>	<b>159</b>
Ways to Round Out Your Character	161
<b>Insanity</b>	<b>163</b>
Insanity Tables	165
<b>Combat Rules</b>	<b>172</b>
Combat Sequence	174
Hand to Hand Combat	175
Horror Factor	177
Perception Rolls	178
<b>Ranged Combat</b>	<b>179</b>
Game Rules for Zombie Combat	181
Zombie Close Combat Firearms Rules	182
<b>Notable Role-Playing Game &amp; Combat Terms</b>	<b>183</b>
<b>Skill Rules</b>	<b>189</b>
<b>Skill Descriptions</b>	<b>195</b>
<b>Epilogue</b>	<b>219</b>

## Quick Find Table

Brad Ashley, Who I Am	12
Brad Ashley, Leader of the Reapers	77
Brad Ashley, On Fighting Zombies	56
Brad Ashley, On Resources	97
Brad Ashley, Zombie Overview	17
Brulyx, Cult of	64
Convergence Multiplier	27
Cult, Terror	62
Cult, Death	64
Death Priest	68
Emily & Robert, see Convergence	27
Experience Level System	155
Experience Point Award Table	157
Experience Tables for Characters	158
Fire	33 & 59
Naomi & Linc, Video	14
Ordinary People, see Survivor O.C.C.	85
Ordinary People, Occupations Start	87
Ordinary People, Criminal Occupations Start	89
Point-Blank Attacks (starts)	182
P.P.E. & Zombies	23
P.P.E. of a Typical Human	23
P.P.E. of Notable Animals	23
Safe Haven Communities	106 & 140
Vehicle Graveyards	21 & 97
Wave, The	7
Wave, Brulyx & Death Cults	64
Weapons	107
Web Video, Naomi & Linc	14
You Must Die to Become a Zombie	29
Zombie Apocalypse	8
Zombie Combat	56 & 181
Zombie, Fast Moving (see Fast Attack Zombie)	43
Zombie, Serial Killer (see Mock Zombie Pretender)	51
Zombie, Slow Moving (see Sloucher)	38
Zombie, Smart (see Thinker & Mock Zombie)	47 & 50
Zombies, Active After Feeding	24
Zombies, Armor Rating	36
Zombies, Attributes Start	32
Zombies, Bite & Infection	30
Zombies, Bite Myth	29
Zombies, Can't Swim	34
Zombies, Cold Below Freezing	34
Zombies, Convergence	26
Zombies, Decay Slowly	23
Zombies, Descriptions Start	38
Zombies, Dormancy Stops Decay	24
Zombies, Fire	33 & 59
Zombies, Going Dormant	28
Zombies, Moan, the	25
Zombies, Population Percentage by Type	38
Zombies, S.D.C.	36
Zombies, S.D.C. & Hit Point Recovery	38
Zombies, See & Sense P.P.E.	24
Zombies, Transition into a zombie	10



# The Wave

## The beginning of the end

Before life as we knew it came to an end, people started to get sick. The media called it “**the Wave.**” A Wave of illness, death and destruction that swept the world.

It started out as some kind of sickness. A flu or plague that spread across the globe afflicting millions of people.

In a matter of days after the first reported mass outbreak in Hong Kong, hospitals around the world filled up with sick people. So many sick people that they lined the floors of the hospital halls, waiting areas and even tents in parking lots and parking structures.

When the hospitals were full, the sick were taken to community centers, churches, schools, gymnasiums, government buildings and sports arenas.

Panic ensued as people tried to get away. But where to go? Though the big cities seemed to be hit the hardest, the illness was everywhere. This was *the Wave*. The dying was about to come next.

## Who Dunit?

There are a lot of theories about how it happened and who is responsible for the Wave. Here are the top five in the order of popularity.

### Theory Number One:

#### Altrucure and the Benford Group

*“This is a wonderful day in the world of science and medicine.*

*“COB Pharmaceuticals, a division of the **Benford Group** – an international conglomerate that specializes in research and development, and renowned for its humanitarian work around the world – is ready to release a miracle breakthrough in viral medicine: **Altrucure**, the first vaccine that actually rewrites key sections of our genetic code to enable our own immune systems to adapt to the different viruses that assault us every day.*

*“The vaccine works on a molecular level and has been found to not only to prevent all forms of influenza, autoimmune disease, and even the common cold, but also HIV/AIDS, 39 different types of cancer, as well as a host of other diseases. Side effects are virtually nill. Allergic reactions less than .002%. Altrucure is truly the medical miracle of the new millennium.*

*“We know it all sounds too good to be true, but it is not. COB Pharmaceuticals has been secretly developing, studying and researching Altrucure for nearly 15 years, and the Benford Group has sponsored clinical studies around the world for the last five years. With the blessings of several African nations and expansive test groups in China and India, 2.3 million people have already been inoculated with Altrucure with amazing and irrefutable results.*

*“Now, with government approval in 139 countries around the world, including the United States, Canada, Mexico, the Eu-*

*ropean Union, China, Africa, and India, you must ask yourself, when are you going to get your Altrucure vaccination?*

*“Starting next week, the Benford Group is making Altrucure available around the world. We will be providing the vaccine at rock bottom prices to the nations of the developed world, and free of charge to the peoples of the developing nations. We, at Benford Group, strive to make the world a healthier, better place to live.”*

*– The Worldwide Television Broadcast of the official Benford Group Press Conference*

Altrucure. It was all anyone talked about for months. A genuine miracle cure. The first since the polio vaccine. The greatest of all time. Humankind, it was speculated by many, was on the brink of eliminating sickness and disease. And the Benford Group would lead the way.

Sure there were people suspicious of the vaccine. There were questions and concern over the much touted clinical trials which were said to be much less extensive than Benford claimed. Though the *FDA* (Food and Drug Administration) denied it, there were those who accused the agency of buckling under the weight of pharmaceutical lobbyists and political pressure to rush the vaccine’s approval. The issue the FDA had to deal with was that more than a hundred countries outside the US had approved the vaccine for mass sale and distribution, and it would look bad, real bad, if the US government was denying its citizens the benefit of what was being heralded as the *medical miracle of the ages*. A vaccine that claimed to be 97% effective against viral infections of all kinds as well as some cancers and other diseases.

Protesters that warned the vaccine was a new, unproven medicine that affected the human body on a genetic and molecular level were ignored. The vast and vocal majority, and the Benford Group, won.

Within a year of its mass release, an estimated 47% of the *world population* had been inoculated with Altrucure. It was the greatest inoculation campaign in history, and estimates suggested that number would rise to an astonishing 97% within two years.

When the Wave hit, Altrucure was an immediate suspect.

### Theory Number Two: Pandemic

Governments, books and television shows had been talking about it for years. A virus that jumps from animals to humans and wipes out three-quarters of the human race.

We’d seen sneak previews of such events throughout our history. Twice in Europe with the *bubonic plague*, *smallpox epidemics* that wiped out tens of thousands of Native Americans and exterminated entire tribes, and the *ebola* virus in Africa with its 89% death rate.

Most experts thought it would be the *Bird Flu* that would cause the next deadly pandemic, wiping out 70% of human life in a matter of years. They were wrong.

It was something else. Something nobody had ever seen. Something nobody ever expected. Something Altrucure didn’t protect against.



## Theory Number Three: Germ Warfare

The government and Top Secret experimentation in germ warfare is always one of the usual suspects when something like the Wave happens. Conspiracy theorists were quick to point their fingers at *Uncle Sam, the Russians, the Koreans* and a number of other governments and terrorist groups. Could the Wave be the result of a government experiment in germ warfare gone terribly out of control? Didn't the Wave start in China?

## Theory Number Four: The Wrath of God

When the world seems to be crashing down around your ears, it's only natural to reflect on your past and ask the Lord Almighty, why?

The conclusion some people came to was that the Wave was a punishment from God. That the world had gotten too selfish, too decadent, too cruel, and too removed from nature. We were choking the life from the very planet, yet we still drove our cars, watched our televisions and wondered what our favorite celebrities were doing now. We surfed the Web, created electronic icons of ourselves, clamored for Internet pornography, and sought out fame and celebrity while millions starved, suffered and died around the world every day. The modern world had become a people of self-absorbed monsters reliant on technology, and were callously insulated from the sorrow and needs of others. Many even questioned the existence of God.

According to the believers, a heartbroken God looked down in anger and decided to punish us with *the Wave*.

## Theory Number Five: Death Cults and Dark Magic

Since the crash of human civilization, a number of Death Cults have risen and taken responsibility for *the Wave*. They claim to be in league with dark gods or supernatural forces that give them protection from, and control over, the living dead. Join them and they will keep you safe. Pray to their hell spawn master and serve their mysterious cause, and they will keep you safe. And you will be among the chosen, living among the dead.

I don't know if such a thing is even possible, but I've seen some pretty weird stuff since the Wave, especially when it comes to cults. If they are responsible for the Wave and the Zombie Apocalypse, then these sons of bitches are evil and need killing.

\*\*\*\*\*

Are any of these responsible for the Wave and the rise of the dead? Probably not. Who knows? Does it really matter if we know what caused the Wave and the Zombie Apocalypse? I don't think so. The survivors, the living, we're too busy fighting to stay alive. We need to stay focused on survival. Survival and killing zombies.

# The Zombie Apocalypse

It was amazing how fast human civilization came apart. Though when I think about it, it makes perfect sense and there was nothing anyone could have done to stop it.

So, imagine *all* the hospitals, clinics, police stations, schools, gyms, government buildings and sports stadiums filled with sick people with the Wave. That's millions of people in every state, province, or country in the world. Nobody knows what it is, why it's happening, or how to stop it. More people are getting sick every day.

Now imagine after one week, these sick people start to die. They die in droves, one after another. Millions of them perish within the next 48 hours.

Panic reaches new heights as word of the deaths leaks out to the public. Streets and highways of many cities become clogged with people trying to flee to anywhere. Most don't have a plan. They don't know where they're going. They just know they need to get out. Accidents jam roadways and create bottlenecks of mass congestion, and freeways turn into parking lots. Some communities experience rioting and bloodshed, but mass violence is the exception, not the rule.

Surprisingly, most people refrain from violence. Instead they raid stores buying bottled water, food, gasoline, batteries, generators and other supplies before sealing themselves up tight in their homes. Some even cover their windows in plastic and tape the cracks of their doors to the outside world with duct tape. Locked down, closed up inside, they huddle together, watch TV for the latest news and/or surf the Internet for the "real truth and by the minute stories" around the world. And they pray for deliverance.

In the next 10 hours there are so many reports of people dead in the streets and in their homes and apartments, that the Police and Fire Department stop responding. Hospital and police morgues are filled with corpses piled from floor to ceiling, as are entire hospital wards where the dead are being stockpiled like kindling wood.

**Then the dead rise.** Unlike today, where the dead rise only a few minutes after a person dies, during *the Wave* it took several hours for the dead to rise. But when they rose, they rose all at once and by the tens of millions. Walking dead. Zombies like out of a horror movie. I'm told the living dead ignored people sick with the Wave and went straight for the healthy people. As for the sick, they would die in a couple days and rise from the dead as well, adding millions more to the legion of zombies already spilling into our streets.

You have to bear in mind, the dead are rising in the morgues of *police stations, hospitals, schools, churches* and *government buildings*. The first victims of the murderous zombies are the people at the very core of our infrastructure at the very institutions we turn to for help. The first responders are among the first to fall. The police and firefighters who protect us are among the first to fall. The doctors and caregivers who heal and help us are the first to die. Our government leaders, educators and heroic



volunteers also perish at the hands of the rising dead. Most don't even know what hit them. Those who realize they are being attacked by the recently deceased can't believe their eyes before they are killed and turned into zombies themselves. And that's the worse part, every man, woman and child killed by a zombie becomes one themselves, quadrupling the zombie population overnight.

**The Zombie Apocalypse has begun.** Those we turn to in crisis are the first to fall to the risen dead. Worse, a short time after they are slain, the cops, soldiers, heroes and good Samaritans rise from the dead to join their undead brethren. The zombies kill with tooth and claw. They lash out with primordial instinct. The more people they kill, the larger a force the undead become. Before long, zombies spill into the streets and spread across every town in the world.

It's a horror movie come to life. It all seems unreal. Impossible. And yet it is real. The dead walk and they slaughter the living. Those they slay rise again to join the zombie legions – the Creeping Doom – bellowing in the night and converging on anyone they encounter. It will be days before people even begin to realize what's happening and what they are up against. By then, it is too late. The living dead number into the billions and the living are playing catchup one neighborhood at a time.

Those locked inside their homes have no idea about what's going on. Initial reports on television and radio tell of *people* (not zombies) driven crazy by fear and panic attacking police precincts, hospitals, clinics and places where the sick and dying are kept. There is some speculation that perhaps a manifestation

of the mysterious illness is driving some of the sick to mindless violence, but it's just conjecture. Some stations report isolated rioting (not zombies attacking en masse) and show video footage of overturned cars and shambling mobs clawing at the sky and bellowing like animals. There is even the occasional footage of hand to hand combat and gunplay in the streets. Some show police officers, national guardsmen or citizens unloading their weapons into their attackers, yet the victims of the gunfire only stagger back for a moment and resume their attack. Adrenaline, drugs, and we can't be seeing this right, are the initial rationale for why the assailants don't fall despite taking several bullets to the body.

After awhile, the live reports stop, as reporters in the field stop sending live feeds or vanish entirely.

The Internet is the first to make claims that the dead have re-animated, like zombies of myth and horror films, and are attacking the living. Such reports are dismissed as hysteria, insanity and hoaxes, yet the stories persist.

The army and the national guard are dispatched to some cities, but since many armories, government buildings and military facilities had already been helping with the Wave, one third are among those to fall to the initial zombie onslaught. The rest find themselves woefully inadequate to deal with the violence, death and chaos the Wave has unleashed across the world. Those who stand and fight are overwhelmed and become zombies themselves. Those who retreat from the cities, with as many civilians in tow as they can take with them, live to fight another day. The former are many. The latter are much too few.



**This is still the first 24 hours since the dead have risen.** Imagine, if you can, the madness and chaos. Who do you turn to for protection when the police are gone and 911 doesn't answer your calls?

Where do you take the sick and injured when the hospitals, churches and schools are under siege or have become places of the dead?

What do you do when the fire department doesn't respond and the squeals of sirens – fire trucks, police cars, ambulances – go silent after a week long cacophony of noise during the Wave?

How do you know what's going on when city hall is in flames, your leaders are missing, and your cell phones, televisions and radios go dead?

We've become an information driven world. We are reliant upon cell phones, TV, radio, computers and the Internet. We are used to having information with a click of a button. We expect to reach our friends, loved ones and the outside world with a simple telephone call, email, private message or blog. When we lose our means to communicate with the outside world, the world shrinks to what we can see and hear – which isn't much at all – a few hundred yards. We feel isolated, afraid and alone, especially when we can hear gunfire, shouting, and screaming outside. You don't know what's happening down the street or even at your next-door neighbor's house. We try to make ourselves believe we'll be safe inside our home and barricade the door and grab a knife or baseball bat as a weapon, just in case. Those who have a gun take it out of hiding, check it, load it, and keep it ready for the unknown waiting outside their door.

The silence is terrifying. The isolation, oppressive. The fear, worry and uncertainty, overwhelming. Should you sit tight or flee? Where would you go? What is the danger? Who is the enemy? How can you protect yourself? Who can you trust? Where can you hide? Where's your father, or mother, or brother, or sister, or the children, or Uncle Alex, or your friend, or sweetheart? How can you reach them, find them, or protect them? Should you even try? Where is help? Why aren't the authorities doing something?! Surely help – the army, someone – will come to your rescue. Won't they? It's madness and paralyzing. People stay holed up in their homes for days, in some cases, weeks and even months, until they are besieged by a throng of zombies or decide to make a run for it.

Only the brave, foolish and desperate dare to venture outside to glean information or to find help. Only those who think fast, act faster and the lucky will survive the experience.

Imagine that your wife is ill or injured. She needs medical attention, so you gather up your teenage son, 10 year old daughter and fragile wife, and go outside. The police station is only five blocks away. Easy walking distance. You don't know if the streets are clear and you don't want to lose the car, so you've decided to walk. Besides, you are less obvious that way, and surely the police can help or advise you once you get to the station house.

You step outside into the cool night air and are surprised by the stillness of your neighborhood. Nobody is outside, though you see a few curtains move as neighbors peek out from time to time. The four college-age men at the "party house" (at least that's what you call it) step outside their door and walk to the end of their front porch. One is holding a baseball bat, another has a butcher knife, all of them clutch a beer in the other hand for liquid courage. "Dude," shouts one of them. "I wouldn't go anywhere if I was you. I mean it, man. Go back inside."

As if to emphasize the point, you hear the pop, pop, pop of gunfire somewhere a block or two away. It's too close for comfort, but it is in the opposite direction from you're heading. There is also a siren moving off in the distance, and you can see a half dozen streams of smoke several blocks away from what you imagine are house fires.

You ignore the neighbor boys' continued protests and move down the street. The streetlights are on and that gives you some measure of confidence. As you quicken your pace down the block you realize there is somebody standing near a car just ahead. You can't believe your luck when you recognize the vehicle as a police car and the man standing next to it is a cop!

"Officer! Officer, thank God," you exclaim and rush forward with your wife weakly in tow. You notice the policeman's blood stained shirt only as he reaches out for you. At first you think he's reaching to help your wife, but a second later you feel his hand grab your throat. Your wife staggers back and whimpers as the policeman reaches up with his other hand and squeezes your neck with them both. His fingers are cold as ice and his grip is like iron. The policeman hisses and snarls as he tightens his grip and chokes the life out of you. You see your son pulling at the cop's arm and punching him in the neck, but it doesn't seem to matter. Your vision blurs and turns to black.

After picking up your son and impaling him on a broken fence post, the zombie cop is distracted by the noise of a fight in

the alley behind the house you were in front of, and shuffles off toward the commotion.

Your wife cradles you in her arms, sobbing, for several minutes. She's in shock. Your little girl is too, and she has curled up into a ball and rocks back and forth next to a fire hydrant.

"Oh my god, Jim? You're alive," your wife exclaims as you put your arms around her and pull her close.

She's wrong, of course. You're one of *them* now. When you open your eyes again, the world is completely different. The woman in your arms radiates with life. Life you want to devour. You rip out her throat with teeth and enjoy the taste of the blood that spills into your mouth. But it is the energy – the *life energy* that once radiated from her that fills you with warmth and satisfies your sudden hunger. You revel in the comforting warm glow for a minute before you push her dead body off of you and rise to your feet. Your memories are gone, you don't know nor do you care where you are. The world is a montage of shifting shapes, color and light. You can feel the life nearby in the houses around you and you smile. Food. More food.

As if you could feel her presence, you turn and see a living ball of light huddled a few feet away. Before you died you'd have recognized her as your daughter. Now she's light and energy and alive. The hunger boils up inside you again and you want to devour her light.

The little girl screams as the body of her brother suddenly wiggles and writhes in an effort to pull itself from the fence post. You look in that direction to see what the light is screaming about, but you only see the dark figure of one of your brethren stuck on something. It's none of your concern. You turn back to the screaming light, grab her by the hair and smash her head open against the metal object she was leaning against. The light flares and fills you and your fellow zombies on the post in equal portions. You again revel in the sensation before wandering down the street in search of more light to feed upon.

The boy is still struggling when the body of his mother twitches and rises as one of the living dead and moves toward one of the houses. She can feel the life inside and hopes to be able to reach it. A few minutes later, the body of the child also rises, cold blood still dribbling down her face as she runs down the street in search of prey.

That's how it works. One cop-zombie inevitably created four more zombies without even trying. In the early weeks that happened often, because nobody knew what they were dealing with. The information about zombies risen from the dead and how to kill them, wasn't out there. They'd think the zombie was alive, or worse, somebody hurt and in need of help. I suspect millions of people died walking right up to a zombie in an effort to help a fellow human being or to get help from someone in uniform. As a result, people fell to zombies in alarming numbers. Their ignorance and inability to mass communicate via the usual ways wiped out half the human race. Hundreds of millions of people, worldwide, turned into zombies after the Wave. Turned into the living dead before anyone knew that the dead had risen to feed upon the living. Or that the victims of zombies rose to join their killers. That's how the dead came to reign upon the Earth.



# Who I Am and Where We Are Today

Who am I? How do I know these things?

I'm one of the lucky ones, a survivor. I'm *Brad Ashley*, the leader of **the Reapers**, and I've been fighting zombies since the dead first began to rise.

You're reading the **Reaper's Survival Guide**, which is part historical account as I know things, part instruction manual on how to kill zombies, and part guide on staying alive in North America post-Zombie Apocalypse. We print copies of the Guide wherever we find electricity, paper and a working copier or computer printer.

It's been five months since the **Zombie Apocalypse**, and things have only gotten worse.

As far as any of us can tell, the US government is gone, or at least it has gone underground and doing us no good. There are soldiers, Reapers, Shepherds of the Damned, scavengers and others who fight zombies and try to reclaim pieces of our land, but none of us are official agents of the government. We're all on our own. I imagine it's the same most everywhere.

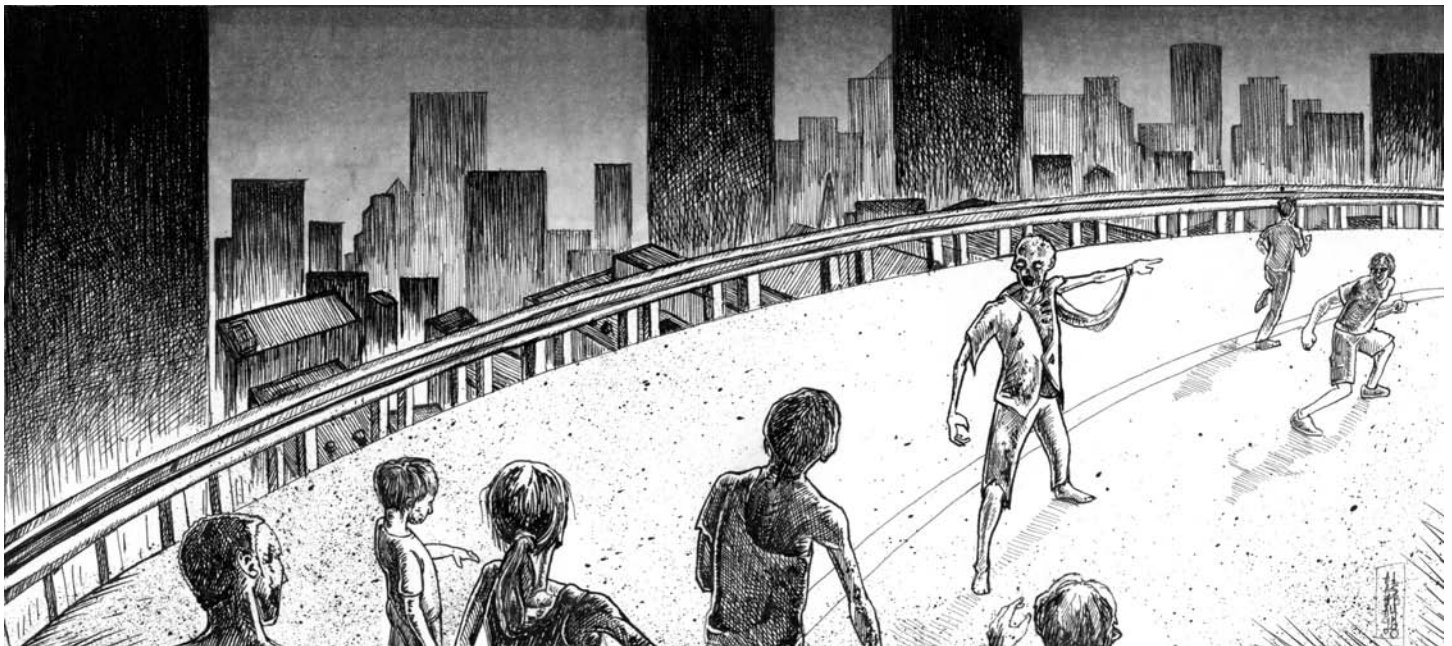
Most communities don't have electrical power, running water or lines of communication. The Internet was the last method of communication to go down, but it fell a few weeks after the Zombie Apocalypse began. There are no television or radio stations, world wide web, or cell or telephone lines. Actually, that's not entirely true, there are pockets where you can still get cell phone reception and or a live telephone line, but who is there to call? Some folks have gone to using CB and shortwave radios, and there's always military field radios if you can find them, but these are really only good for comparatively short-range communication between small, established groups like the Reapers; nothing large scale or public. Heck, there are still people holed up out there who don't know what's going on or that there are survivors fighting to stay alive.

The dead reign over most cities and towns of any size. That only makes sense, because that's where the most people were, and that's where the most people died and reanimated. So the largest population centers have become zombie central and best avoided.

**According to rumor and speculation**, 70-80% of the human population has died. Half of them turned into zombies by zombies. And those numbers could be higher, there's no way of knowing. That's a lot of living dead waiting to feed on your life energy. And every one of us that dies becomes one of them, making the living dead stronger and us all the more outnumbered. So learn to live smart and fight well.

So an estimated twenty or thirty percent of the human population remains alive and free. That may sound like a lot of survivors to some of you, but it's not. Reality check time: 20-30% is nothing. In **Detroit**, you're talking 180,000 to 270,000 surviving out of around 900,000, of which somewhere around 600,000 are stinking zombies. Those aren't good odds by any stretch of the imagination. Those human survivors had to flee the city or be overwhelmed and killed. Fortunately, Michigan has an expansive wilderness region in the northern part of the state, but Detroit is the donut hole of a sprawling urban area. There is one suburban city after another all around Detroit for at least another 50-60 miles (80-96 km) around the city proper. That's a lot of ground to cover and a lot of zombies to avoid on your trek to greener pastures.

**Larger cities** with heavy populations, like New York, Baltimore, Atlanta, Chicago, Houston, Denver, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Mexico City fared much worse. The dense populations of these communities meant people were packed like sardines in a can. The zombies slaughtered and feasted on the living before anyone recognized the threat. Millions perished only to rise as zombies themselves – according to rumor as many as 85-95% of the population becoming the walking dead. This makes the biggest population centers ripe with the most resources to scavenge, but also the most heavily populated by zombies. In some cases, like New York and Mexico City, millions upon millions of zombies. New York has a popu-



lation of approximately 8 million people who actually lived in Manhattan (more if you include commuters who worked in the city). Mexico City had a population of 14 million. If 85-95% percent of the population became zombies, well, you do the math.

**The woods and remote areas** are the least populated by zombies. They're safer than cities and towns, but the living dead can be found out here, too. The majority of zombies stick to the cities because they know us living will come to them, scavenging for supplies and searching for survivors. For the moment, zombies don't seem to like to travel. We speculate that human prey are too spread out in the woods, making the search for food more difficult and time consuming and expend more energy. Consequently, zombies would rather go dormant and wait for humans to come to them, which we do. It hasn't happened yet, however as fewer and fewer people venture into the cities for zombies to prey upon, it seems inevitable the undead will start to spread out and venture into rural areas and wilderness regions.

**The Wave is over.** Whatever caused the Wave – the sickness that started our downward spiral – it seems to be done. Gone. Nobody has gotten sick since the initial Wave struck. Once zombies began appearing, nobody else got sick. Now, zombies are created only by other zombies. That has led some people to speculate that if the root cause was some kind of germ, it has mutated from an airborne contagion to one passed on by contact.

I don't buy that. Despite the myths of old movies about zombie plagues, people bitten by a zombie do NOT get sick or turn into the walking dead. A zombie has to kill you, drain you of your life energy, and then it is only after you have *died*, that you rise again as a zombie. That transformation happens in a matter of 6-12 minutes, hardly enough time, you would think, for a germ to mutate your entire body into the living dead. Personally, I haven't talked to anyone who has a plausible theory about how people became zombies in the first place, or why those slain by a zombie turn into one themselves. It's important to note here, that if you die by any other means, disease, accident, suicide, natural causes, you do *not* become a zombie. You have to be slain by one to become one.

That having been said, the bite of a zombie can cause serious infection, and about half of the people bitten get sick and die. If you get bitten, the wound must be treated quickly and thoroughly. If not, you may lose your limb or your life. Furthermore, I've seen people who were nearly killed by a zombie, survive the infection and coma, and come back as something not quite human. We call them the **Half-Living**: A person who seems to be partially transformed into a zombie, but retains enough of his humanity to remain human. It's a weird and uncomfortable thing to see, but you're usually safe from a Half-Living until he dies. The trouble is a Half-Living who dies by any means will rise as a zombie. As usual, the undead creature has no memory of its past life and feeds upon the living without hesitation or remorse.

**Another abomination are the Zombie Death Cults.** A number of Death Cults have begun to spring up in the last few months. Like the zombies they worship, they're found mainly at urban locations. They claim to be responsible for the Wave and the Zombie Apocalypse. Don't know if that's true, but I find just making such a claim is reason to kill them. Furthermore, I've

seen first hand, Cult Priests commanding packs of zombies like loyal hounds, so they do have some kind of influence over them. The saddest part about these cultist is that they recruit frightened, desperate people to join them. I can understand the desire to live or the need to protect your family, but joining a Death Cult isn't the way to do either. God only knows what these cultists are really up to, or why they're doing it, but none of it can be good.

As Reapers we take down Death Cults the same as zombies. We try to figure out who among them are innocent people and liberate them, and who are the twisted madmen who worship zombies and bring death. We try to rescue the innocent and we kill the death worshippers. As far as we can tell, a dead cultist doesn't come back from the dead as a zombie, but to be certain, we still advise taking off their heads or stomping their brains. As for the innocent people who are conned and duped into joining their unholy fraternity, we eye-ball them like wolves. If we aren't sure they can be trusted, we leave them behind no matter how much they cry or plead otherwise. If we suspect one might really be a cultist or a damned Death Priest, we leave them behind. If they make a ruckus or threaten us in any way, we gun them down where they stand.

Maybe that sounds cold and cruel, but these are cruel times, and if you want to live you have to make hard decisions. In this case, it is better to be safe than sorry. You don't want to be protecting a Death Cult Priest who might lead zombies right to you, your legion or a safe haven community. You don't want to let no zombie-loving wolf into your henhouse, understand? That's stupidity and a quick road to destruction. What little we have, what few communities we've purged of zombies, it is all fragile and we can't afford to lose it all by taking foolish chances. If you don't realize that, then you're already one of the walking dead and just don't know it yet.

This war isn't done. The human race is not finished. We're fighting to save humanity and some innocent people are going to suffer and die in the process. Millions already have. That's just how things are in a world where the dead reign and you want to stay among the living. Humanity will win, and if you're smart and careful, you'll be part of its resurrection.

– *Excerpted from the Reaper's Survival Guide*

## A Thump in the Night

What was that sound?!?!?

We have all had that thought in the middle of the night as we lay in bed, the dark enveloping our home, our loved ones sleeping next to us or in a room down the hall.

What would you do if that noise was something more than the wind or creaking floorboards? What if that noise was a monster from the depths of your nightmares? A monster consumed with hunger and bent on devouring you and everyone you hold dear? What if the *living dead* were breaking down your front door or crawling through your windows, and nobody was coming to save you?

Would you hide?

Would you race to confront the danger and fight to protect the ones you love?

Or would you run away, leaving your loved ones to the not so tender mercies of the walking dead?

These are choices you must consider in the world after the **Zombie Apocalypse**. A world where law and order are things of the past, and safety comes from the barrel of a gun and the end of a crowbar. It is a vicious world, a place where life and death battles take place every day. And so far, the dead are winning.



## The Day the Dead Rose

It's still on the Web if you can get to it. Accounts and video footage of the Zombie Apocalypse. One of the most famous, before the Internet went down, was a video entitled Naomi and Linc Escape, downloaded by 120+ million users. Probably because it was more than just terrifying film footage. It was human and it offered hope.

The video starts overly bright and out of focus, suggesting an untrained cameraman. The view swings clumsily, showing a brief glimpse of afternoon sky scarred with several columns of black smoke in the distance. The camera finally settles on a striking young woman crouched behind a low wall. Her eyes are wide with terror and tears stain her cheeks. She's dressed in a waitress' uniform and clings to a large frying pan with grim tenacity. The twenty year old woman takes a peek over the wall and you realize she and the cameraman must be on a rooftop.

"You get that thing working yet?" she asks, turning her attention and face to the camera.

The shot tilts up and down as the cameraman nods. The woman looks into the lens, and appears to gather her thoughts. After a moment she speaks into the camera.

"My name is Naomi Winslow. I'm a waitress. I was a waitress. My friend Linc is working the camera. He's one of the cooks. We . . . we thought . . . someone should record this, so people know what's going on."

Naomi pauses and shudders before continuing. "It's the end of the world. Show 'em, Linc."

The camera moves from Naomi to peer over the low wall and down onto the street below. This could be "any town USA," probably somewhere in the Midwest. The four-lane street is littered with stopped vehicles. Many of them are dented and their windows smashed as if a gang of thugs had taken baseball bats to them. Others are burnt-out wrecks, a few even still smolder. Some cars are up onto the curb and sidewalk where they crashed into a building, lamppost or another car. The rest are simply abandoned. The camera pans up for a minute to show a building at the end of the street, where the tail of a small aircraft juts from the fourth floor of a smoldering storefront. It may take a moment before the viewer notices the sound of several car alarms in the background. Then there is the faint sound of screaming, shouting and gunfire in the distance.

A moment later, a group of people make their way down the street, shambling and limping along in a disheveled mob of 35 or 40. The camera zooms in on the group, displaying a few faces. Their eyes are vacant, skin gaunt and pale, and their mouths hang slack. Many are wounded, some grievously. Nearly all of their mouths and hands are smeared with blood.

"They aren't people," says the voice of Naomi, and the camera turns back to focus on her again. She's gazing down at the street below, clutching her frying pan so hard her knuckles are white.

"I mean, they used to be people, but they're not anymore. They're monsters." Her eyes look into the camera again, with a haunted expression. "They're zombies. God damn, zombies."

Naomi turns away from the street and slumps down with her back to the wall. Tears pour from her eyes as she runs a hand through her disheveled hair.

"This isn't a joke. It's real. The zombies, they're everywhere. Millions of them. Killing everybody. Oh God, that pack below are probably hunting us right now.

"It's the Wave. It has to be. A lot of people got sick and died. And then . . . and then they started to come back as zombies. God, it sounds crazy to say it aloud, Linc. God, I wish I were crazy. I wish it were all a dream. TV and radio been dead since yesterday. Police and 911 don't respond . . . they are probably dead too. Don't know if my Mom and Dad are . . . dead or not. Linc . . ."

"Naomi," says the voice behind the camera. "Hold it together."

The young woman takes a deep breath and continues.

"There wasn't any warning. Sure we knew people were sick, you know. But it was the Wave, and if you were okay, well, you went to work like always. Like we did. And that's what I mean, we were at work and all of a sudden there's people screaming. We look outside and, God, there's like this mob, you know?"

People coming down the street. Some are in hospital gowns. Some were naked. Some . . . some looked hurt, covered in blood. We . . . we thought they were people from the hospital at first. Then they started smashing store windows and climbing onto cars in the street. They . . . just started to attack everyone. Pulled people out of their cars. And . . . we saw them biting and tearing at people like animals. Ripping them apart with their bare hands. It was horrible.”

Naomi stifles a sob, wipes her nose on her sleeve and continues.

“A bunch of our customers bolted from the restaurant to head for their cars or to run away on foot. The mob goes after them, you know? We still don’t realize what we’re up against. That these people aren’t even alive, they’re zombies. But . . . but Mr. Angelo locks the doors and tells us to get away from the windows. I think fifty of us tried calling the police, but we couldn’t get through: ‘All circuits busy due to the unusual high volume of calls. Please try again at a later time.’ People inside started to cry. A couple of the cooks and the manager, Sam, grab knives, brooms and things to, you know, use as weapons.

“Next thing we know, the mob is at our front door. They are moaning so loud it’s all you can hear. Then they start pounding and smashing through the windows. The glass cutting right into them, but they keep coming. Jerry, one of the busboys, runs up and hits the first man with a chair and knocks him back. Then hits another. The moaning is deafening and drowns our screams. One of them grabs Jerry by the sleeve and he’s pulled into the mob before we can even react. We hear him screaming but . . . we can’t see him. He’s buried by the mob. Then his screams stop and the mob pushes through the door and climbs through the smashed out windows, tearing parts of the door down with them. We head for the kitchen. Someone bars the door, but a second later, God, a second later the mob is pounding on the door and it begins to buckle.

“Most people ran outside. Two of the cooks stabbed the first people in the mob with knives, but it didn’t phase them. Linc grabbed his backpack and he and I went up to the roof, instead of the parking lot.”

Naomi pauses and looks over the wall again, and the camera follows. There appear to be even more zombies shambling down the street. A group of them are gathered around a crashed car. Their fists hammer at the windows and shatter the windshield. The camera zooms in as the zombies drag a screaming man from the car. They prop him up against the vehicle and hammer on him until the screaming stops a moment later.

“The police aren’t coming,” Naomi says as the camera shows the zombies beginning to disperse. “I think they’re all dead. God, there’s nobody to help us. Nobody.”

As Naomi’s strength crumbles into sobs, Linc keeps the camera trained on the street below. For several minutes he captures the crowd dispersing, zooming in on various people to show that they are dead, covered in blood, have shards of glass sticking out of their bodies, knife wounds, bruises and cuts no longer bleeding.

“Naomi! Naomi, I’ve got it,” says the voice behind the camera. “I’ve got one coming to life!”

Sure enough, the mangled body of the man they pulled from the car and killed only six minutes earlier, rises from the curb. His clothes are torn and stained with his blood. His head is cocked to one side and looks as if his neck is broken. He doesn’t look around or try to run, instead he joins the ranks of the undead that just took his life and shambles off with them.

The camera image spins as Linc turns away from the street and back to Naomi. She has stopped crying but looks numb and broken.

“You okay, Naomi?”

“No.”

“You need to pull it together, girl.”

“Why?”

“Why?! We gotta get out of here. Get this video to one of the networks or police or someone. Let people know what’s going on.”

“Don’t you get it?” groans Naomi in a weak voice. “There’s no network to get it to. The army isn’t coming. No one is coming to save us, Linc. It’s just us. Us and . . . them.”

“Hey . . . HEY! We’re still alive, ain’t we? We’ve hid from them for a day and a half up here and they haven’t gotten us yet, have they? We can hole up here till things quiet down and then head off to my apartment.”

“Your apartment? Don’t you think the zombies will hit places full of people like apartment buildings first?” chides Naomi.

“Okay then, we go to your house in the Hills. Ain’t your Dad a hunter? He’ll have guns, right?”

“What good are guns against the dead, Linc?”

“Well, maybe it’s like in the movies. You know, shoot ‘em in the head and you kill the son of a . . .”

“Okay.”

“Okay?”

“Yeah,” says Naomi. “Okay, we’ll go to my house. But let’s stay here for as long as we can, alright?”

“Sure thing. Then we hit your house, grab your parents and some guns and we get out of here. Out of the city.”

“You think we can do it, Linc?” asks Naomi. “I mean really?”

“Sure we can. There’s gotta be other people like us. We’ll find more people, band together, and . . . uh, you know . . .”

“Stay alive?”

“Yeah, stay alive.”

“Linc?”

“Yeah?”

“What if this is the end of the world.”

“Can’t think like that, Naomi. It’s weird shit, but we’re gonna make it. We’re smart. We’re good people, the Lord Almighty will protect us. We gotta believe that.”

“Okay. I believe you.”

– Video footage and dialogue posted online a week after the *Zombie Apocalypse* began. The fate of Naomi and Linc is unknown.





# The Dead Reign

## More excerpts from the Reaper's Survival Guide

### Cities & Towns, USA

You know what I tell people about abandoned cities? They are a better *mousetrap*. And us? We're the *mice*.

**Here's the deal.** the Zombie Apocalypse happened so fast and so completely, that most of the infrastructure has survived. Buildings, houses, stores, gas stations, vehicles, food, water, clothing, fuel, medicine, tools, weapons, ammunition and other vital supplies are all right there, in the cities, waiting to be taken and used. Some cities still even have working electricity or the means to start it up again. Everything you need is waiting for *you*. And there's plenty of it.

**The cities aren't like what you remember.** They're ruins of life from five months ago. Empty and deadly. Overnight the landscape of the world you still remember and dream about disappeared and was replaced by something out of a nightmare.

The safety and security of modern society is gone. Completely gone. There is no law and order. No police. No government. No leaders. No safe havens. No churches, mosques or synagogues. No schools or universities. No shopping malls, restaurants or bars. No Grandma's house or the neighbor next-door. It's gone. ALL GONE. And you have to accept that.

**Here's the problem:** The cities and towns abandoned by us living are not empty, though they may appear that way. They are overflowing with the walking dead. Zombies are EVERYWHERE. Hundreds of thousands to millions of people died and rose as the living dead in just about every city and town in the world, and that's where they remain. Towns and small communities have the same problem on a smaller scale, but don't fool yourself, even if you're dealing with a few hundred or a few thousand zombies, you are probably in over your head. Don't let the numbers fool you, it's all pretty much the same for us living. Deadly odds against overwhelming numbers. Never forget that.

**A bigger, deadlier mousetrap.** This makes cities rather like that alluring piece of cheese tied to the *mousetrap*. The resources you need – the cheese/the supplies – are right there, out in the open, just waiting for you to come and take them. That's absolutely true. Thing is, you spring that trap and, WHAM, you're dead. Worse for us, you become one more of them.

Going into any urban area means walking into a *death trap*. The fatality rate in cities and surrounding towns was astronomical. If more than 5-10% managed to escape within the first week, it was a miracle. That means 90-95% of the population in and around major cities like Atlanta, Chicago, Cleveland, Dallas, Detroit, Houston, Las Vegas, Louisville, Los Angeles, Miami, Milwaukee, Minneapolis, New York City, Phoenix, Pittsburgh, Toronto, Windsor – hell, the list is endless – are *zombie central*. Miles upon miles of cities, urban sprawl and neighboring communities filled with zombies waiting for you to come and pay them a visit.

You need to realize this right off the bat and accept it. Our world is gone. It belongs to them now. You can't afford to be in

denial about that. To a starving man, the risk might seem worth taking, especially if there doesn't seem to be any zombies around at the moment, but your desperation doesn't change the reality of the situation.

I'm not saying never go into a city, suburb or town. I'm saying you must know what to expect if you think you have a chance of coming out alive.

### Know Your Enemy

I think of zombies as *dinosaurs* and us living and breathing humans as, well, human beings.

Most zombies are cold-blooded, slow moving, and dumb as bricks. Most don't use weapons or tools, they can't drive a vehicle or use modern equipment, and they hunt like big, dumb animals.

Us humans are warm-blooded, fast, smart, resourceful and use weapons, tools and technology to great advantage. It is why any of us are still around today.

That might sound like the odds are in our favor, but they are not. Quite literally, the odds are stacked against us.

A city like Chicago is crawling with millions of zombies. Millions. Even if you could kill a thousand of them or ten thousand in a single day you wouldn't make a dent. There would still be millions of them. Do you hear me? MILLIONS. And they are everywhere.

**Zombies 101.** Here is just some basic zombie crap you need to know if you think you're going to stay alive for more than five minutes.

- *Zombies only have one purpose, to hunt and kill you.* That's it. They don't have jobs, hobbies, dreams or desires. They function entirely on instinct, and that instinct is to prey on you and all living beings.
- *Zombies will slay animals,* but animals do not rise after death as zombies. This means you may see a zombie horde converging on a dog or other animal, but they prefer humans. Maybe because we are comparatively slow and easy to catch and kill. Or maybe because our energy tastes better, nobody knows.
- *Zombies are dead and cold,* so they do not radiate heat and cannot be seen or detected on infrared or thermal-imaging optics or sensors. That means you can't tell a zombie from a real corpse or a stick of furniture.
- *Zombie vision is different than our own and, I'm told, they can see our life energy.* Living human beings and animals radiate with an invisible energy, like an aura, that we can't see, but the walking dead can. That aura can't be seen as well outside, during the day due to the strong ambient sunlight, but at night and in dark places, our auras shine like beacons – we become *human fireflies* visible for as far as the eye can see. That's why zombies are more active during the night than the day, because we are easier to spot and hunt at night.
- *Zombies also sense life energy.* The exact distance is in dispute, but it's at least 15-20 feet (3.6-2.1 m). They can't pinpoint your location with this sensory ability, but a zombie will sense you are within a particular area and come looking for you or take a hiding place and wait for you to come out.

- *Zombies are twice as strong as most normal humans and have a grip like a steel vice.* One gets its hands on you, and you better have a machete or cleaver to chop off its hands or a gun handy to shoot its head off, or it is all over. Using the buddy system can be a lifesaver, provided he or she can keep his wits and do the job for you before the zombie kills you.
- *Zombies don't feel pain,* at least not like us, so hurting them doesn't slow them down at all.
- *Slow moving or not, most weapons have little or no effect on the undead.* Shoot, stab, or bash the body all you want and the damn thing keeps coming. Slice or shoot a hand, arm or leg off, and the damn thing keeps coming.
- *Zombies use mass numbers and converging attacks,* which is what will kill you every time. More on that in a minute.
- *Take 'em down fast, baby, fast.* Us seasoned zombie killers don't break much of a sweat against one zombie, or even two or three, but you have to act fast, and if possible, do it *quiet*.
- *A well placed head shot will kill a zombie.* Destroy the brain and you stop it dead in its tracks. Chop off the head, and that zombie's down for the count.

Sound easy? Guess again. I can tell you from experience it's not. Even at close range it is more difficult than you would think, especially when you're dealing with a growing mass of undead converging on your position, which is almost always the case. You are scared, adrenaline is pumping that makes you want to act fast, which usually translates into acting sloppy or reckless. You end up shooting without good aim, shooting too soon, too far away, shooting too much or firing wild. *That means missing the mark.* Oh, you may hit the zombie. You might even shoot him in the head, but did you take out his brains or did you just shoot off his face, because if you did the latter, that S.O.B. is still coming right at you. Fire off your rounds too fast or wild, and the next thing you know, you're out of ammo and need to reload, only that zombie, he's not polite enough to give you a chance to do that; he's still coming for you. Likewise, you trip, stumble or bump something and your shot goes off the mark, you miss, and the zombie's still coming.

- *Zombies fear fire, but that only helps you so much.* Fire hurts and kills the walking dead, and they fear it. Brandishing a single torch will hold a dozen at bay. At least as long as the fire burns or until another dozen or two undead arrive, surround you and attack knowing you can't burn them all.

As the saying goes, play with fire and you're likely to get burnt. Set a zombie on fire and now you have an angry, burning zombie trying to kill you as it sets everything it touches on fire while in pursuit. A punch from a blazing zombie fist does the same damage plus damage from the fire! A flame covered zombie trying to hold or strangle you will also set your clothes and hair on fire, not to mention the entire building may burn down around your ears.

Fire may kill zombies, but it takes time (1D6+6 melee rounds), more time than you can probably afford. Furthermore, a zombie covered in flames is almost guaranteed to do a lot of collateral damage. Use fire judiciously and out in the open, not indoors.



- *Zombies respond to sound.* Make a loud noise, like a gunshot or scream, or even talking at a normal volume level, and you are going to stir up the entire nest or worse.
- *The zombie's moan is the worst sound you can hear.* It's like a siren to the undead that tells the creatures, a) food is here, b) come from wherever you are to join in the kill, c) kill, and d) feed.

If you can take down a zombie silently with an axe or crowbar before it can start moaning or bellowing, do it! That will help reduce the odds of other zombies coming to investigate, but do it and beat feet out of there, or do it and stand still, be quiet and wait.

The sound of combat, the sound of the zombie's body hitting the floor, and the sound of you moving around will alert other zombies in the immediate area to your presence. However, if you are quiet, the zombies that heard the noise might not come to investigate, or only one or two will come, not scores of them.

Let even one zombie let out that cursed moan, and you are in a world of hurt. The zombie's moan is not like a barking dog, it is a call that prey – that's you – has been seen and identified. It tells the zombies the location is the source of the moan. And EVERY zombie within earshot begins to head toward the moan.

The range of the moan is considerable. Several hundred yards minimum. If you are in a house, that's every zombie inside the home and the next several (2D4+2) houses and outside area around it. That's probably 12-48 zombies heading to your position. As soon as the other converging zombies catch even a glimpse of you or sense your presence, they begin to moan as well. This amplifies the noise level, extends the range and calls more undead to your position. Now, you are in serious trouble. Get out fast or die.

- *The converging attack of zombies is what kills you nine out of ten times.* The moan calls them to feed and they swarm like sharks that smell blood. Like sharks, every zombie within blocks, even miles depending on the sound level, comes circling in. The number of zombies can grow geometrically – two quickly becomes 4, four becomes 8, eight becomes 16, sixteen becomes 32, thirty-two becomes 64 and soon you are surrounded, hopelessly outnumbered and dead.
- *Zombies go dormant.* It's not sleep exactly, but when prey is not around, zombies find a nice corner, hiding place or cubby hole and go dormant. I've been told it's kind of like animals that hibernate, the creatures go into stasis mode, slow their metabolism and their deterioration process, and they wait until something wakes them. This is more dangerous than it might first sound.

A zombie finds a dark corner, leans against the wall standing up, closes its eyes and hibernates until a sound, smell or the sensation of the living wakes it up to investigate. With so many millions of zombies, especially in the cities, the *undead infest* empty buildings like cockroaches. They are everywhere, pervasive, and deadly.

A zombie might be found among a pile of debris, behind a dumpster, inside a burned out car, under the steps, and in every shadowy corner of a house or building. One might be waiting in the attic or in the basement standing next to the

furnace, or under the stairs, or under the bed, or standing next to the bookcase or refrigerator, or behind the couch, under a table or desk, curled up next to the stove and everywhere in between. Stir up a nest of them and you could have zombies seeming to come out of the woodwork and you better have an exit strategy or ten mapped out in your head, or you're going to be tonight's zombie dinner.

I once heard some bug expert say that a spider is never more than six feet (1.8 m) away from you. I'm telling you to think about zombies the same way. In the city, there is probably one undead not more than six feet (1.8 m) from you at any given time, you just don't see it yet. Pray it hasn't seen you.

Zombies can be anywhere and all around you; probably much closer than you think. Be careful, be smart. When you clear a room, you better be damn sure it is clear. You need to look behind the door, under the desk, behind the sofa, behind the drapes, under that blanket or pile of clothes or leaves, inside the bathtub, and in that dark, shadowy corner of the room. Anyplace a body could be standing, laying, sitting or curled up under or behind needs to be checked out. If you don't, you might find a wailing zombie on your back. It's slow, painstaking work, but I've seen plenty of people die because they weren't thorough, and it's usually a teammate who trusted their buddy's reconnaissance who bites it, not the jerk who missed a dormant undead. That makes dead bodies something to worry about. You find a corpse, odds are it's a dormant zombie and best to be avoided or decapitated before it gets up to stalk you.

Don't misunderstand, even though zombies go dormant, they do not need to sleep, they can go all night, and they hunt the living around the clock, 24/7, and many do.

- *Not all zombies are the same.* Something like 80% of the walking dead, be they **Slouchers** or **Crawlers**, fall into the category of slow moving, instinctive hunters.

*Then there are the others.* Aberrations or variants that break the mold and keep us on our toes. They include what we call **Fast Attack Zombies**, who hunt more like predatory animals and run down their prey or leap out from an ambush point; **Flesh-Eating Zombies**, the name says it all; **Pattern Zombies**, who relive a fractured piece of their human life like a broken record, except to stop and kill you; **Thinkers**, who are smart like a chimp and use those smarts to lead other zombies and hunt us better; and **Mock Zombies**, abominations that keep part of their human memories and insist they are not the walking dead, but prove otherwise when they kill you. Each possesses a different set of behavior, abilities and attack strategies. Each represents a different set of problems to handle. All are found in the cities and towns. Be careful.

- *Not all zombies are ugly and obvious walking corpses.* Yes, it is true 90% or more of the walking dead look like rotting corpses, but not all. Inevitably, those recently turned into the undead, and those that get plenty of life energy, may look fresh as a daisy. That can spell trouble if you are not careful. I think it's human nature to want to help somebody in need, especially women and children. That's a gut instinct you need to curb. You don't want to run up and put your arms around a little girl or boy only to find out she's a damn zombie when it rips your throat out. Be wary, cautious and alert.

## There is more to fear than zombies

Forget about zombies for a minute, here are some other dangers to worry about in urban environments.

**1. Dog Packs.** The cities and towns have been abandoned by the living for five months now. That means a lot of dogs have gone wild. Some are just packs of strays who won't attack nobody and always back down to people, but steal food, bark and cause commotion. You might be thinking, *how much of a problem is that?*

It's a big problem. The barking and yapping of these mutts may attract other animal predators, human predators and zombies. The walking dead have keen hearing and always investigate sounds and disturbances. That means they always come to see what dogs are barking about. The louder and longer the noise, the more undead that come to have a look see. That also means the sound of a motorcycle, vehicles, generator, power tools, gunfire, voices and even one damn dog barking, will attract zombies. Don't forget, Zombies can kill and feed on the life energy of dogs and other animals too, so that's another reason the walking dead follow the sound of a barking dog.

**2. Feral Wild Dogs.** When you're talking about dogs, it's the wild dog packs that have gone feral you have to worry about. These animals have become more like wolves than pets, and I've seen wild dogs tear a healthy man to ribbons. Thankfully, they don't generally attack if there's more than six or eight of you, but you can never rule it out, and if one or two of you get separated from your party, watch out. That makes having a *Hound Master* as a member of your team useful, because they know how to handle wild dogs.

Even if wild dogs don't attack you outright, they still represent a danger to children, the wounded, animals and your supplies. If a wild dog smells blood, it increases the odds they'll attack. If a feral dog smells food – and I mean any kind of food, meat, bread, cookies, a candy bar – they'll go for it. These animals are starving too and will do whatever they have to do in order to survive. I've seen strays and wild dogs run through a camp or group of people like wild horses, leaping and grabbing a backpack or sack containing food and supplies, snatch it right out from a man's hands, and run off with it more times than I can count.

You also have to worry about any animals you may have brought with you, too. Wild dogs, the feral ones, will attack horses, mules, oxen, or other pack animals, as well as other dogs, especially if the animals are left unattended. Wild dogs always think twice if there is one or more people present, but finding a tethered animal alone is an invitation to dinner. And like I said, most people don't realize it, but zombies can feed on the life energy of animals, so the undead will attack and kill a horse, dog, cat, squirrel or whatever they can get their hands on. If there's a human present, they'll go after him first and leave a dozen horses alone, so I imagine eating animals is not as satisfying for them, but they'll do it. If you lose your animal not only have you just lost your companion, ride or work animal, but any gear it was carrying or may be your means to make a hasty retreat.

It doesn't end there. A dead animal spells trouble because it attracts wild dogs, stray dogs and other predatory animals. Maybe even dangerous people living in the ruins.

See how everything spirals so quickly into chaos? That's why I always advise people to be alert, aware, prepared, fast-thinking and even faster to take action. One slip up and you are dead, or worse: one of the walking dead.

**3. Animal Predators.** Wolves, coyotes, mountain lions, even bears and other animals have moved into the cities since we've moved out. They, like us, are attracted to the bounty the city has to offer. If the doors or windows of a grocery store or house are broken, it is an invitation for animals to come in to find shelter and to feed on whatever's available. Most animals are fast enough to keep out of the hands of the zombies and some may even feed on zombies when they can get a small one, a Crawler or one by itself. Zombies are dead meat and most predators are scavengers as well as hunters, so as long as the zombie isn't too rotten or doesn't put up too much of a fight, some animals may attack and rip pieces of flesh out of the undead to eat.

A nice juicy human being, or your pet or pack animal is a much preferred target of predators over zombies. Again, these predators are more likely to attack your animal, a lone individual, or a wounded person than a group of three or more people. However, if you startle the beast, accidentally corner it, or threaten its young, all bets are off and an attack is likely.

With all the houses and buildings left broken open, wild animals can be anywhere. A basement, crawl space, attic or burrow under the porch are all nice places for an animal to live. Rabies and other diseases can be a concern too, and a rabid dog, fox or coyote will get to a point when it becomes aggressive, unafraid of humans, rage-filled and murderous. So will a rabid person. Both have to be put down.

**4. People Predators.** Not all survivors are good people. Some folks are crazy, some are cultists, some are Retro-Savages and some are bandits. All of them spell trouble.

Whenever us Reapers find what appears to be human survivors in a city – which happens more often than you might think – we look them over hard before we offer any help. As Reapers we are well armed and tend to travel in comparatively large groups, so dangerous people usually keep their distance or hide from us. That won't be true for most of you. People in small groups of 10 or less have to be careful and discerning of everyone they meet. Forget about the obvious scum who preys on their own kind to survive, even a scavenger or family that has survived this long on their own may be crazy or dangerously paranoid. Such madmen may rob you out of desperation, or kill you out of some paranoid delusion or misunderstanding. Even ordinary folk can be the death of you. A lot of people have come to live by the rule, "better safe than sorry," and you don't want to be on the wrong side of that rule.

**5. Retro-Savages** are one example of how the human mind can get twisted into knots and get good people killed. These people have decided the Wave and the Zombie Apocalypse is the wrath of God and that they are the *chosen people*. Chosen, because they have given up modern technology and pray a lot.

To the Retros, those of us who still use modern technology, fight zombies and hope to reclaim our cities, are the *bad guys* and *crazy ones*. So they ambush us and kill us, or give us information that sends us right into the arms of the zombies. Even worse, more and more Retros have taken to capturing people and leaving them stripped of their possessions, and tied up like

sacrificial lambs at a designated location. A place where zombies have learned to come and visit every night because there is often easy prey shackled to a post waiting for them to feast upon. As I understand it, the Retros rationalize they are doing God's work by leaving us for the zombies. They reason they don't have innocent blood on their hands, because it was people like us who God sent the zombies to punish. Like I said, crazy and dangerous. It's best to avoid anyone you think might be a Retro-Savage. They live in clans and tribes, and if you see one, it's a sure bet there's a whole bunch more nearby.

**6. Bandits** are just what you think they are, bushwhackers, crooks and bad guys who have formed a gang and victimize their fellow man. The least of these punks just rob you blind. The worst will gut you, rape your women and then take your belongings. The largest bands may even raid homesteads and safe haven communities. To us, bandits are no better than the zombies and should be put down like rabid dogs. Beware of them.

**7. Death Cultists** scare the hell out of me. Nobody knows what their agenda is, how they control zombies, why they worship the dead, or what they want with human people in their cults. None of it can be good, so we kill them when we can and otherwise keep our distance. I advise you do the same.

**8. Traversing the shattered landscape isn't easy.** The cities and towns of the Zombie Apocalypse have become dangerous wastelands. They are a 3-D snapshot of the Apocalypse. Vehicles litter the streets. Jack-knifed semis, accidents and massive pile ups, or thousands of abandoned cars, block stretches of road, streets, and freeways, making road travel in a vehicle difficult at some places and impossible at others. The multitude of vehicles, like the cities they were fleeing, offer potential resources a survivor can use – gasoline, a container of motor oil, a blanket, tool kit, crowbar, clothing, bottled water, first aid kit – but with doors left wide open and windows smashed out, any of them or all of them could harbor wild animals, a madman, bandit or zombie.

**9. Beware Vehicle Graveyards.** A vehicle graveyard is any place where dozens of abandoned vehicles create a bottleneck or hundreds to thousands of vehicles fill the road for a long length. I've seen freeways bumper to bumper with abandoned vehicles that stretch for miles, especially in and around major cities. And they may become your place of death if you don't avoid them.

Vehicle graveyards are home to zombies, bandits and wild animals. Every vehicle in the graveyard, whether it's fifty or fifty thousand, offers a place where zombies and danger can hide, wait in ambush or set a trap. One or thousands of zombies may lurk among the husks of cars and trucks, laying in wait inside, under or behind the vehicles. Remember, one zombie is all it takes to make you one of them, and there is almost certain to be more than one at such locations. Other walking dead may lurk in the neighboring woods, or among the homes or buildings off the exit ramp or along the highway, and probably do.

I strongly encourage people to avoid vehicle graveyards. Stay off the road and stay away from clusters of abandoned vehicles. When you come across them, go around them. Small, fast, reliable off-road vehicles are your best bet, and that includes light motorcycles rather than the big hogs, bikes under 700 pounds (315 kg).

Sure, motorcycles, scooters and even bicycles can squeeze through narrow spaces, weave around cars and ride down the side of roads, but to think they are the solution is a fool's dream. Many of these roadways are completely blocked at some point with trucks and cars on top of concrete dividing walls, on the median, up the grassy sides of the freeway, with many more piled up along the shoulder where others tumbled down from the hillside to create a junkpile of cars. I've seen exit ramps packed with vehicles often smashed together and on top of each other or so tightly packed that you need to climb over them on foot to get past them. It's a mess.

You hit an impasse like that and you have to turn back or find a way to get around. Only that may not be an option, because the sound of your ride as you rode to this point alerted every zombie you passed. Hundreds, perhaps thousands, of the walking dead climbed out from the vehicles and are moving in your direction. If you go back, you'll have to try to get around them. Not a likely prospect, especially since you have to navigate the debris field that is the vehicle graveyard. Maybe you can run, but to do so means leaving your bike and everything you might have with it in the vehicle graveyard. Now you're on foot with what you can carry, and you are all the more vulnerable. Worse, every zombie in a mile (1.6 km) radius is being alerted to your presence by their damn moan, and they are converging on your direction. Not a good scenario by any stretch of the imagination.

**Bottlenecks are death.** Even if you can maneuver through or around a cluster or canyon of abandoned vehicles blocking the road, you have to do it slowly and you probably have to get close to the abandoned vehicles. Close enough for a zombie to reach out of the vehicle and grab you or your bike. Close enough for a Fast Attack Zombie to leap on you. Slow enough for a Crawler to pull itself out from under a car and send you and your bike tumbling when you hit the damn thing. Bottlenecks are always a place for ambush and trouble. Go around them and do it quietly.

That goes for small bottlenecks involving only a dozen or two dozen vehicles and offering a truck-sized opening right down the middle or side. Dude, trust me, it's a trap, especially if it's under a bridge or viaduct. Don't think you can fly through it going 100 mph (160 km), because if you hit a piece of debris, a pot hole, or a stinking zombie, you are going head over tea kettle. If you survive crashing your bike, you're easy pickings for whatever's waiting for you. And that's just if dumb zombies are present. If it's an ambush point for bandits, cultists or Retros, you may be facing nets, chains, barricades and armed assailants. And let's say by some miracle it's not an ambush point, you've still spilled your bike, probably done damage to it, and probably damage to yourself. Again, leaving you vulnerable to wild dogs and whoever or whatever might come along. If you're hurt bad, blood loss, infection, zombies or the elements will finish you off sooner or later.

**10. Navigating City Ruins.** It has been five months since the dead rose. Five months in which nobody has maintained and taken care of the buildings left standing with broken windows and knocked down doors. Five months of rain, snow and weather. Five months of small skirmishes and damage done to the structure of buildings. Five months of rot, decay, burst water pipes, fire, and weather. Rotten floorboards and stairs your foot

might go through, a collapsed stairway or portion of the roof or ceiling, a gaping hole in the floor or ceiling, animal nests, debris piles, overturned furniture and so on, all create danger zones and obstacles to deal with. It's not true of every building, but many.

Without power, skyscrapers, office buildings, stores and homes are more like *caves* and *debris fields* than a haven or place to explore. You can't just jimmy a lock, walk in, turn on the lights and breathe a sigh of relief. Every move you make is fraught with risk and danger.

First, the power is out in most communities. That means you're walking into a dark shell like a cave. Even if the lights were working, you'd probably want to keep them off. Turning on lights announces your presence to everyone within eyesight.

To navigate in the dark, keen vision helps, so does a lantern or flashlight, or better yet, several flashlights of varying sizes and intensity. A burning torch or cigarette lighter can do the job too, but both run the risk of starting a fire, and a cigarette lighter doesn't offer sufficient light to see all you need to see.

You'll want to look close at every pile of leaves and debris to make sure there's no a zombie or animal under it. You'll need to look behind every piece of furniture to make sure the undead or some other danger isn't lurking there. And you have to step over and around overturned furniture, debris piles and rubbish.

Every home and building is, in effect, a maze, and a maze you don't know. Which means you don't know if somebody or something has already searched the place or lurks somewhere inside. And you sure as Hell don't know if the place is crawling with zombies.

**11. Losing your wits and awareness.** You don't want to jump at every creak of the floorboards or groan of the wind, but you do need to be aware of your surroundings and your place in it. Always have two or three escape routes from every room or location in your head. Always have a combat strategy in mind, and always listen to your gut. If something doesn't "feel right," get out. If that last creak or thump sounded suspicious, check it out. And always be ready for action. I tell you this, because there will be moments, even in the city, when you will feel safe, but should not, or you'll get caught up in the excitement of the moment and forget about where you are. If you find a cache of supplies you need, you might become so focused on gathering up what you need that you stop listening for telltale signs of danger or the approach of zombies. If you are exhausted, you might give in to shutting your eyes for just five minutes. Be alert, be aware, don't take chances, and be ready to fight and run.



## Secrets of the Dead

"We've been fighting the walking dead since they took their first steps. Even though it has only been five months, me and my crew have killed thousands of the monsters, rescued thousands of people, and have survived this long, so we know a thing or two about zombies. Things we want to share with others so you can survive too.

"Everything you need to know about zombies is presented in the pages that follow. Read them. Trust what we tell you, and memorize every detail. It will keep you alive.

"Why and how the dead rose to kill the living is a question that remains unanswered. How they function, how they behave, what they hunger for, and answers to other questions are things we can tell you."

— Brad Ashley, Leader of the Reapers  
& hero of the *Zombie Apocalypse*

**Zombies are the reanimated corpses** of people who died in the Wave or were themselves slain by the walking dead. There are seven known types of zombie:

- 74% Slouchers
- 10% Crawlers
- 5% Fast Attack Zombies (Aberration)
- 5% Flesh-Eating Zombies (Aberration)
- 4% Thinker Zombies (Aberration)
- 1% Pattern Zombies (Aberration)
- 1% Mock Zombies (Aberration)

Most zombies share the same basic appearance, physical characteristics and abilities, but there are *aberrations*, rare variants (16%) that behave differently and possess some different abilities from the common *Slouchers* and *Crawlers*.

As a rule, the zombie's skin takes on a pale, ashy or green tone. The blood thickens into a thick goo or dries and blackens in the veins. Flesh begins to decompose, so there may be open wounds and patches where the skin has peeled away or dropped off to reveal the musculature or bone underneath. The muscles retain flexibility despite the lack of circulation. The eyes take on a sickly, milky-yellow tone or are replaced by an eerie light that glows from the empty sockets. Zombies retain their senses, and in fact, have a keen sense of hearing and a good sense of smell. Zombies have no need to breathe, yet they are able to growl, howl, bellow and moan, plus some of the rare aberrations even speak.

All zombies are animated dead who exist only to hunt, kill, and feed upon the living. It's a purpose they seem ideally suited for.

## Zombies are always hungry

"You are nothing but food to a zombie. A ham sandwich on rye. Don't waste your breath trying to plead with the walking dead, because they don't understand a word. They can't be talked to or reasoned with, because they have less brains and humanity than your dog. They are driven by hunger. As I said, you are nothing but a meal on two legs. Kill or be killed. Flee or die. That's the way it is when dealing with the walking dead. Nothing in between."

— Brad Ashley, *Leader of the Reapers*

Zombies are always hungry and ever alert for signs of life. When life, particularly human life, is spotted, the creature lets out a loud, droning moan that alerts all other walking dead in the area to the presence of life. As if hearing a dinner bell, the other zombies rise from wherever they may have been and lumber toward the call to feast.

Zombies attack like wild animals with flailing fists, biting teeth and clawing fingernails. Instinct drives them to kill, bite and tear at their prey. To use their fists, claws and teeth to pummel, rip, bite, and kill humans. In the process, a zombie may swallow bits of flesh, but they are not fueled by eating flesh, this is all just making the kill. Despite what films and works of fiction might say about zombies eating the brains, flesh and blood of humans, it's not true. Some zombies enjoy the taste of blood and may lick it off themselves or drink the blood of their victim,

but with the exception of rare *Flesh-Eating Zombies*, flesh and blood does not provide the walking dead with nourishment. Most walking dead feed on *life energy*, better known to psychic investigators and fringe scientists as *P.P.E. (Potential Psychic Energy)*. It is P.P.E. that feeds the Creeping Doom and keeps them alive.

## Zombies & P.P.E.

**P.P.E. feeds zombies.** Life energy (P.P.E.) is the reason zombies gather and *converge* on human prey. When a human being (or animal) is slain, his *P.P.E. doubles* at the moment of death. That life energy automatically disseminates in equal portions to ALL the converging zombies within a *300 foot (91.4 m) convergence radius*. Even if it is *one human* and *several hundred zombies*, ALL zombies within the 300 foot (91.4 m) radius feed on the P.P.E. released at the moment of death. **Note:** Only active zombies taking part in the converging attack share in the P.P.E., zombies within range that might be dormant or otherwise engaged do NOT receive any of the P.P.E. from the kill.

**Even a tiny fraction of P.P.E. tastes good and makes the zombie feel better.** All the zombies in the convergence pause after feeding on the life energy and revel in the nourishment and warmth from the *light of life* (P.P.E.) drained from their victim. This momentary pause will last for 1D6 melee rounds (15 to 90 seconds) before the crowd disperses to wander off. Only spotting another human, or hearing a *Zombie Moan* signifying new prey to be had, will rouse them sooner or redirect a crowd that was moving apart.

The P.P.E. of a Typical Human: Adult (over the age of 29): 1D4+1; Young Adult (20-28 years old): 1D6+3 P.P.E.; Teenager (13-19 years old) 1D8+5 P.P.E.; Child (under the age of 13): 4D6+12 P.P.E. **Note:** Zombie instinct and their ability to sense and see life energy tells zombies that young humans have more P.P.E. to offer them. Remember, P.P.E. is doubled at the moment of death.

The P.P.E. of some notable animals: However, for some reason, the walking dead cannot process the P.P.E. of animals the same as humans, and can only feed on one third of the P.P.E. from animals.

Birds & Rodents (mice, rats, rabbits, squirrels): 1 P.P.E.

Cats, Domestic: 1D4 P.P.E.

Small to Medium Dogs: 2D6 P.P.E.

Large Dogs, Coyotes, & Wolves: 3D6 P.P.E.

Mountain Lions & Similar Felines: 2D6 P.P.E.

Cattle & Horses: 4D6 P.P.E.

**P.P.E. heals and restores.** Feeding upon P.P.E. by slaying a living human being not only nourishes the zombies, but stops their bodies from deteriorating. Feeding upon P.P.E. on a regular basis even partially reverses the zombie's physical decay. Sufficient quantities can restore Hit Points and S.D.C., and delay and even reverse their physical deterioration. Eat enough P.P.E. often enough and a zombie can live forever, albeit as a mindless undead.

Zombies Decay Slowly in the First Place: Zombies decompose at a fraction of the rate at which a normal dead body would. Even without P.P.E. a zombie would live for 1D4 years.



**Dormant Zombies:** By entering into a sort of hibernation, or dormant state, a zombie can effectively slow its decomposition to a crawl; roughly the equivalent of one week's worth of decay for every six months spent dormant, even if that dormant time is scattered into several short periods broken by activity. Decomposition is halted completely if the zombie is physically frozen or active in temperatures below freezing. A frozen zombie can be kept dormant but alive for centuries! **Note:** See *Going Dormant* for complete details.

**Stop Deterioration:** Zombies do not need a lot of P.P.E. to keep them going. Eating just one P.P.E. point, even if it's in small, fractional portions scattered over three days – prevents deterioration/decay. One P.P.E. point every three days keeps the zombie at its current state of decomposition.

**Extra P.P.E. Heals:** Every one P.P.E. beyond the minimum to survive (above) instantly restores 3D6 S.D.C. and 1D6 Hit Points.

**Reversing Decomposition:** When all S.D.C. and Hit Points are at full level, each additional one P.P.E. point reverses the decomposition process by the equivalent of one month. With enough P.P.E. a zombie could be restored to look “fresh” as if it were only recently deceased and newly risen. Once refreshed, the decomposition process starts all over again. With enough P.P.E. even on an erratic basis, a zombie could live for decades, even centuries. **Note:** Reversing the decomposition process also restores eyes that may have rotted out of their sockets or been lost in combat. However, lost limbs are NOT regenerated, nor are open wounds, gashes, bullet holes, and missing body parts. Such damage and missing limbs add to the zombie's charm. Also see *Zombie Armor Rating, Hit Points* and *S.D.C. by Location*.

HOWEVER, it is important to realize that human life is at a premium (estimated 30% of the population remains alive!) and most zombies do NOT get enough food to stop or reverse decomposition. In other cases, the zombie is only able to stop deterioration for awhile. Furthermore, decay happens faster than many people think, with the body bloating, fluids oozing out, and maggots appearing nearly all in a matter of a few days. Months after the Zombie Apocalypse began, at least half of the zombies look fairly rotten and nearly all look “dead.”

**After Feeding Zombies Remain Active:** Even after feeding on just a fragment of P.P.E. the walking dead feel energized and motivated to find more food. This sends the monster wandering around for the next 1D6+3 days. Likewise, dormant zombies periodically awaken to wander around in search of food for 1D4+1 days at a time. If no food is found, the zombie finds a new place to go dormant (probably can't find the previous location even if it could remember it). It is only dormant zombies who awaken to sound or the sensation of life energy who will go back to being dormant if they can't find the source in 15 minutes. (It's rather like you waking up from sleep because you thought you heard something, but upon investigating you don't see any trouble and you go back to sleep.)



## Zombies See Life Energy/P.P.E.

“When a zombie rises from the dead, it's something very different than the person it once was. A zombie is an inhuman monster. They don't think or function like we do. They don't reason or need the things we do. All they want to do is eat. They want to eat *you*. Only they don't see you as a person, or even as meat, you're a radiant light. A light that attracts them like mosquitoes. A light they want to drain until it's extinguished.”

— Brad Ashley, *Leader of the Reapers*

**Zombies both see and sense the life energy (P.P.E.) of the living.** Zombies see the world through different eyes than humans. They see light, shapes and energy more reminiscent to thermal imaging goggles than human eyes. They see the infrared and ultraviolet spectrums of light as well as light and energy such as Potential Psychic Energy (P.P.E.) that is *invisible* to human beings.

The ability to see P.P.E. makes humans radiant creatures of life and light to the walking dead. Light they seek to devour. This is the same light that some psychics claim to see as the *human aura*. Zombies don't care about the nuances and color of the aura or what the aura might say about the person. To the walking dead, the *light of life* is a beacon that attracts them to kill and turn the light dark.

**Line of Vision:** The aura of life is barely visible in daylight, but zombies can see people up to about 1,200 feet (366 m) in daylight. Zombies see the glowing aura of humans for a long distance at night or in darkness: 9,000 feet (2,743.2 m).

In darkness, the life force of humans and animals shines forth as if they were living neon signs that can't be missed. A sign that says, "Food! Come and get it." Zombies instantly recognize the source of the light as being human, and also recognize humans by their shape, movement patterns, behavior, sound and scent. To hide from a zombie, especially in the dark, humans must completely conceal themselves or the zombie will see the glow from whichever body part is exposed. It is important to understand that while humans and other living creatures are seen as radiant beings, that light is limited to the size and shape of their body. They do not actually give off light that fills a room like a lightbulb. This means if a character hides behind a piece of debris or an overturned table, etc., and keeps his head down, the walking dead cannot see him and may lose his trail. **Note:** A human's aura cannot be contained, hidden by clothing, armor or any other known means.

Sensing Range: The terrible creatures can also sense life energy (P.P.E.): 25 feet (7.6 m) to sense 1-6 people, 50 feet (18.3 m) to sense a group of 7-24 people, and 100 feet (30.5 m) to sense a group of 25 or more people. Half that range to sense animals. One quarter that range, 6.2 feet (1.9 m), when a zombie is dormant. Sensing life energy will awaken a dormant zombie.

Fortunately for humans, the sensing ability of zombies is not so acute that the creatures can pinpoint where a human may be hiding. Rather the zombie knows that one, a few, several or many people are somewhere within its sensing range, but it must still search to find them.

Zombies can see and sense the light of life (P.P.E.) even without eyes: Somehow, with their third eye perhaps, zombies can see and sense P.P.E. (as above).

This explains why walking dead with *empty eye sockets* can still function as if they are sighted. Such zombies have an eerie light that glows from within the monster's eye sockets or have a dot of light that appears within the eye sockets. Some survivors and Death Cultists call the glow the zombie's *After Sight* (as in after death) or *Ghost Vision*.

Even without any apparent eyeballs, the zombie is able to see the human aura as clear and radiant as ever. The creature can also see shapes, shadows and objects, judge distances, attack and negotiate obstacles and stairs as well as a sighted person. To some observers, this is evidence of the zombie's psychic or magical nature, and supports those who hold the theory that the undead are the product of either *dark magic* or the *wrath of God*.

Zombies are dead and do not radiate with life: Zombies, themselves, have no such aura. They are cold, dark creatures without body heat or an aura, which means zombies cannot be seen by infrared and thermal imaging optic systems. That's worse than you might think, because it means thermal optics and sensors can NOT identify them or their hiding places in darkness or when a zombie is dormant laying in wait for prey. Rather the zombie registers the same as a piece of timber or lifeless furniture. Passive nightvision is effective only in the sense that the human using it *may* recognize a dormant zombie that is out in the open. Otherwise, good luck, because even a dormant zombie will sense the presence of human life that gets within 6.2 feet (1.9 m) of it, wake and attack.

And the dead shall rise: A victim slain in a zombie attack and his P.P.E. absorbed, rises as the walking dead within  $2D4+4$

*minutes* after expiration. Meanwhile, the zombies responsible for his murder move on in search of more living prey.

## How Zombies Hunt

To say zombies "hunt" is to use the term in the broadest sense of the word. Zombies are always hungry, always looking for prey to feed upon, and either wander around in the hopes of stumbling across prey, or lay dormant waiting for human prey to come to them. Consequently, Zombies ALWAYS move toward, moan at, and attack any human being they see. They do not "hunt" in the sense of methodically looking for food, following tracks, setting traps, making plans or using strategies and tactics, nor do they use weapons. As a rule, most zombies simply wander around in the hope of sensing or seeing the light of the living and respond accordingly.

## The Zombie Moan

### – A Call to Dinner

"That moan of theirs is like a damn alarm bell and beacon rolled into one. Every walking dead within a 12 city block radius is going to head toward the sound of the moan. They'll zero in on it with uncanny accuracy. As other zombies catch a glimpse of you, they start moaning too. You'd be amazed how loud that gets in a matter of seconds.



“Your only hope is to shut the moaning up when the first one or two start by taking the zombie’s head off or smashing in its skull. You need to do it fast, in less than 30 seconds, and quietly, because shouting, gunfire and other sounds associated with humans will keep them converging on your location, moaning or no. My advice to most of you is, when the moaning starts it is time to go home. Get out. Get out fast.”

– Brad Ashley, *Leader of the Reapers*

The Zombie Moan or bellow is a call to feed. All zombies recognize the moan as meaning: “*We have sighted prey. Come join the pursuit and feast.*”

All zombies, with the possible exception of a *Thinker*, *Mock Zombie* or *Flesh-Eating Zombie* will answer the call. The walking dead know by instinct that the moan means “edible life” has been spotted. All zombies within earshot of the sound crawl out of their hiding places and head toward the location of the moan. As other zombies see the living, they point, moan and head toward the person(s). The end result is a gathering *choir* of monstrous voices that builds in volume. The closer the undead get to cornering or capturing the prey, the louder and more intense the sound of the moaning becomes, calling even more zombies to join their converging brethren to feed.

**The zombie attack.** Zombies are simple, animalistic creatures of instinct that kill by tooth and claw. They bite and rip with their teeth and claws, punch and hammer with their fists, kick with their feet, and sometimes use objects like clubs and rocks to bludgeon their victims to death. A zombie may also use its hands to strangle its victim, or throw him around, push him to the ground, or grab and pull. In a group of zombies, several may grab hold of a victim’s limbs, pull, and literally tear a person apart. In all cases, the killing is done by close combat.

**The gathering doom.** The most frightening aspect of a zombie attack is that the walking dead always gather and kill in large groups. In that regard, they might be considered pack animals, though a better analogy is *piranha* or *sharks*. When a shark smells blood in the water (up to two miles/3.2 m away), *every shark* that picks up the scent becomes agitated and races toward the source of the blood. Zombies do the same thing. Hearing the moan instills zombies with excitement and launches a feeding frenzy that entices *all zombies* within the radius of the moan to converge toward it, and the moan can be heard for a considerable distance.

Range of the Moan: 1,000 foot (305 m) radius from 1-4 zombies.

2,400 foot (732 m) radius from 5-10 zombies.

5,000 foot (1,524 m) radius, roughly one mile or 12 city blocks in all directions, from the collective moaning of two dozen to one hundred zombies.

11,000 foot (3,353 m) radius in all directions from more than a hundred zombies.

Survival Note: Whenever possible, it is ideal for a human to kill a zombie before it can moan, or quickly after one has started to moan. You want to stop the sound before it alerts and attracts others, or get out fast!

**Stopping the Zombie Moan provides a chance.** Quickly killing, decapitating or smashing the moaning zombie’s brains

out *may* prevent other zombies from coming. This must be done within 30 seconds (two melee rounds) and before one or more other zombies in the immediate area spot the humans and also start moaning and coming toward them. When several zombies see human prey and start to moan, it is usually time to make a hasty retreat or expect to get caught in the tightening net of advancing zombies. The only exception is if all the zombies can be silenced in the same 30 second period.

As noted previously, the *Zombie Moan* alerts their fellow walking dead that living prey has been spotted, and they should converge to make the kill. The zombies will come, unless that *call to feed* is halted fast. Stop the moan within 30 seconds, before the walking dead outside and farther away can pinpoint the location of the moan, and they lose their *homing beacon*. Without the moan, they are lost and disperse to wander off in all directions. **Note:** Only 1D4x10% of the zombies within a 300 foot (91.5 m) radius of the initial moan will continue to look around in that immediate area for the next 2D6+3 minutes. If they find humans, the process starts all over again. If they don’t find any living beings, the monsters tire of the search and go dormant again or wander away.

## The Convergence

“That’s how they get you, you know. They circle in from every direction, growing in number every 30 seconds. They surround you, and close ranks. Sooner or later one of the hundreds – hell, in the cities, make that thousands – is going to see you. The damn things will converge on you, and it’s all over, my friends. Trust me on this. Get out while the getting is good. Get out while you’re dealing with three or twenty zombies, not two hundred or two thousand. And those numbers climb fast. You need to have 10 escape routes in mind before you ever set foot in the city. Otherwise you’re flying by the seat of your pants, and that will get you killed more often than not. Luck can only carry you so far.

“Be aware of your surroundings at all times, be smart, think fast, act faster and get out when the moaning starts.”

– Brad Ashley, *Leader of the Reapers*

Zombies swarm and converge on their prey, corralling them in a constricting circle of the dead, before overpowering them by sheer weight of numbers. This is the zombies’ instinctive method of hunting and killing, and it applies to all *Slouchers*, *Crawlers*, *Pattern* and *Fast Attack Zombies*. Only the aberrant zombie variants, the *Flesh-Eating*, *Thinker*, and *Mock zombies* (10% of the entire zombie population) will hunt alone or use other strategies and tactics to hunt and kill the living.

The convergence is as terrifying as it is effective. The moan is the alarm, the signal that food, human prey, is afoot. By converging, the zombies create a circle of hunters/attackers which casts a wide net of individual creatures (hundreds to thousands in most zombie populated cities) on the prowl. That closing net of walking dead is almost certain to encounter anyone fleeing from the initial moaning zombie(s).

For the fleeing human(s), the convergence creates an intensifying sense of urgency as more and more zombies appear, see him, point, moan and move toward him. And that’s the horror – a human or group of humans could handle one or two zombies,



maybe even six or eight zombies, but as they rise to answer the call of the moaning, they seem to crawl out of the shadows in a geometrically expanding multitude. First there is one or two, but the moaning causes several others nearby to appear, seemingly out of nowhere, then several more. Two becomes 4, four becomes 8, eight becomes 16, sixteen becomes 32, thirty-two becomes 64, sixty-four becomes 128, one hundred and twenty-eight becomes 256, two hundred and fifty-six becomes 512, five hundred and twelve becomes 1024, and on it goes. It all happens in a matter of one or two minutes. (**Note:** Double the number of zombies converging every two melee rounds/30 seconds!) And they are all converging on you. They all want to kill you. Truth of the matter is, the human(s) on the run probably falls victim to a zombie convergence at the hands of 30-60 of them. Even if the fleeing human(s) manages to run, or hide for a minute here or there, the more zombies that respond to the moaning, the more likely one (or several) will find him, corral him and wait as others circle closer, then move in for the kill.

This all makes perfect sense when you realize that zombies feed on P.P.E. energy, and that by attacking in a converging swarm, not only are they stronger, not only does their prey become surrounded and trapped with a sea of undead horrors, but ALL the zombies within range get to feed on the doubled P.P.E. released at the moment of death! Convergence equals success at feeding. Terrifying and effective.

**Convergence Multiplier:** Double the number of zombies every two melee rounds (30 seconds).

**Duration:** Zombies will keep coming and actively look for prey known to be on the prowl in the area until the moaning stops. Moaning stops after a kill is made or if the prey has not been spotted, even in the distance, by any walking dead for 15 minutes. If the walking dead lose sight of human prey for more than 15 minutes, the gathering horde disperses to wander around agitated by the near miss, or return to their hiding place, or a new location, and go dormant.

### An Example of Convergence

A pair of streetwise scavengers, Emily Thompson and Robert Glass, have ventured farther into the city than usual. It is dusk and the sun has begun to descend behind the silent walls of the city. Like the zombies that inhabit it, the city is a crumbling and decaying ruin that serves as a somber reminder of life past.

When Emily and Robert step out of an alley and onto a deserted street, a lone zombie a few yards away is the only witness. They're not afraid. It's only a slow moving *Sloucher* the two teenagers can easily outrun. Emily and Robert turn in the opposite direction of the *Sloucher* and begin to trot down the street at an easy pace. The wretched creature lifts a crumbling arm, points in their direction and unleashes a loud, deep moan as it shuffles after them. The noise it makes is a half groan and half bellow that echos down the concrete canyon of the city streets like the wail of a mournful banshee or beached whale.

Ahead of Emily and Robert, another *Sloucher* unfolds itself and rises up from the hulk of a burned out Mustang. The pair stop and turn to see three zombies emerging from the doorway

of a church across the street. Two more exit one of the other buildings and the two can hear moaning and shuffling from inside the building behind them. Emily and Robert begin to quicken their pace down the street as more zombies appear in windows or step out of their hiding places and onto the street. In a matter of one minute, zombies seem to be crawling out from under porches or dropping down from second story windows. All point in their direction and unleash their own terrible moans as they shuffle toward the living.

Emily and Robert suddenly realize they are being surrounded and make a mad dash to outrun the closing circle of walking corpses while they still can. The pair manages to squeeze past a trio of undead. Emily gasps as one of the zombies hands combs through her flowing hair as she ran past it. Thank God it didn't manage to grab a handful or she might have been caught.

More zombies will be responding to the dinner call of the moaning, but if they can turn a couple of quick corners and get out of sight, they should be able to get away. The shuffling horde gives shambling pursuit, but the teens are too fast for them. "Out hidden motorcycles are only a few blocks a way and then we'll be safe," thinks Emily as hope wells up in her chest.

Then, they hear it – even through the crescendo of groans and howls in the distance – the pound of heavy feet across pavement. Two, maybe three *Fast Attackers*. Zombie runners that have rushed out from the undead horde to chase them down like dogs in the street.

The *Fast Attack Zombies* knock both of the teens to the ground. They don't move in for the kill, but make sure Emily and Robert are kept off their feet, off balance, and unable to run away until the rest of the living corpses close in for the kill. Emily screams as the walking dead reach down to make the final kill. All feed upon the life energy – the doubled P.P.E. released at the moment of death – and leave the battered bodies of their two prey laying in the gutter.

The ponderous but unrelenting death hides in the shadows, waiting, lurking until one of their own gives the signal. Then they move out, surround their prey, attack, and kill with tooth and nail. Biting, beating and ripping at the bodies of the living until they give up their last breath. Then the zombies turn and retreat back to their dark places or wander the streets until they happen upon their next victim.

The horror of this scene is not yet done.

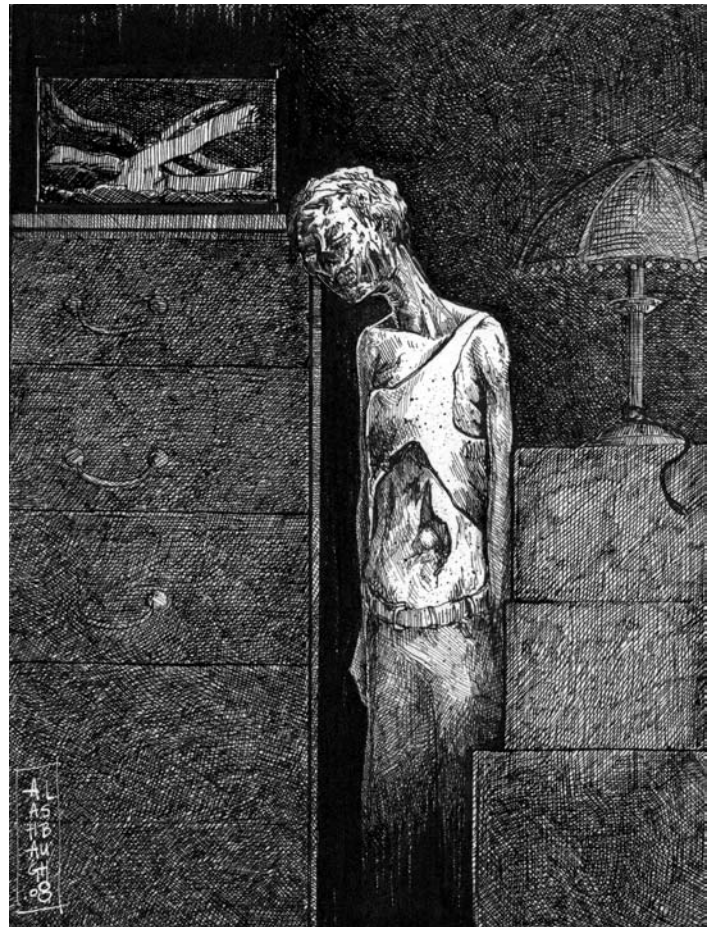
A few minutes later, the torn and bloodied bodies of Emily and Robert gurgle with undead life. They rise and shamble off to join the monsters who just slew them as zombies themselves. That is why they are known as the Creeping Doom – the devourers of life, the undead hordes.

## Death Lurks in the Shadows – Zombies Go Dormant

"Zombies have all kinds of ways to survive. One is *going dormant*. They don't seem to age or rot when dormant, but they are still dangerous as hell. The damn things can go dormant standing up, laying down or curled up like a ball. They find a dark corner or concealed place, like under a desk or behind the couch, and the second one of them hears you, smells you, or senses your presence, it rises up to find you. Yeah, that's right,

they are alert to humans even in their sleep, and the moment a zombie awakens, it's hungry. When one sees you, it bellows and the rest of them crawl out of their hidey-holes like cockroaches. God, I hate the walking dead."

– Brad Ashley, *Leader of the Reapers*



**Zombies can slip into a dormant state at will.** This is a sort of stasis sleep or hibernation that slows their deterioration drastically.

**This ability to go dormant has serious ramifications for humans.** It stops or slows zombie decomposition and keeps the creatures alive for years, even decades, longer than they might normally live. Not only does going dormant keep zombies alive for extended periods, but it means *zombies may be hiding anywhere and everywhere*. This is why it may seem as if zombies crawl out of the woodwork.

**When there is no food** (human prey), a zombie finds a dark corner or out of the way place and "goes dormant." Zombies don't have jobs, hobbies, friends, goals, or interests, so when there is nothing to do and no prey to be had, they enter their dormant state and effectively hibernate.

A zombie can, and often does, sleep *standing up*, which means a dormant zombie may be standing behind a door, behind curtains, inside a closet, in the attic, inside a crawlspace, under the stairs, in the basement next to the furnace or the bookcase, next to the dresser or entertainment center, standing among a stack of boxes or hung clothing, etc. Others may lay on the floor under a desk or table, under the bed, or behind the couch, in the

bathub/shower, tucked up behind, next to, or sitting in, an easy chair, recliner, couch, cedar chest or other piece of furniture, and so on. Outdoors, a zombie might be dormant behind, under or inside a dumpster or vehicle, in a truck well, under the porch, standing in a corner on the porch, in or under the gazebo, behind the shed, behind the garbage cans or a wood pile, standing behind a tree, laying under a bush or among a pile of debris, or under a pile of leaves, papers or garbage, curled up inside an abandoned car, etc. In short, zombies can be found dormant almost anywhere.

That makes traversing city streets, neighborhoods and especially, going inside a house or building, extremely dangerous. You **MUST** check *every* nook and cranny, and possible hiding place, or risk having a zombie awaken and grab you from behind or without warning.

**Ever alert, ever hungry.** While in stasis sleep, zombies remain aware and alert to sounds and activity that suggest the presence of humans or other living prey. Even in this sleep-like stasis, a zombie will awaken to the sound of human voices, movement, shouting, gunfire and other loud noises, as well as when the monster hears *the moan* or *senses life energy* (*P.P.E.*) *nearby* (within 6.2 feet/1.9 m). Even if the zombie is not sure the sound is being generated by a human source, the creature is likely to investigate the noise, especially if the noise suggests footsteps, rummaging, fighting or voices. A zombie may also sense the presence of human life energy, especially if there is more than one person, within 6.2 feet (1.9 m) of its place of slumber.

When a zombie awakens, it is instantly primed to attack and feed. If it is close to the prey and able to attack quickly, it will do so without letting out the famous *Zombie Moan*. Under such circumstance, the zombie that makes a kill gets *half* the doubled P.P.E. and the rest disperses to any other *active zombies* in the 300 foot (91.5 m) radius. If there aren't any active zombies, the slaying zombie gets all the P.P.E.; zombies that are dormant do NOT receive any of the P.P.E., only active zombies.

If the zombie awakens to prey not within easy reach (15 feet/4.6 m), or if the prey sees the monster and flees, the awakened zombie lets loose with its *Zombie Moan*. The moan instantly awakens any other dormant zombies within a 1,000 foot (305 m) radius and attracts any active zombie in this area to the sound of its call. As zombies converge at the location where the moan emanates – the zombie keeps moaning until the prey is slain – the human(s) has only a few minutes to get out, hide or stop the moan before the circle of advancing zombies trap him and attack to kill.

**It bears repeating: Stopping the Zombie Moan provides a chance.** Quickly killing, decapitating or smashing the moaning zombie's brains out *may* prevent other zombies from coming. This must be done within 30 seconds (two melee rounds) and before one or more other zombies in the immediate area spot the humans and also start moaning and coming toward them. When several zombies see human prey and start to moan, it is usually time to make a hasty retreat or expect to get caught in the tightening net of advancing zombies. The only exception is if all the zombies can be silenced in the same 30 second period.

As noted previously, the *Zombie Moan* alerts their fellow walking dead that living prey has been spotted, and they should converge to make the kill. The zombies will come, unless that

*call to feed* is halted fast. Stop the moan within 30 seconds, before the walking dead outside and farther away can pinpoint the location of the moan, and they lose their *homing beacon*. Without the moan, they are lost and disperse to wander off in all directions. **Note:** Only 1D4x10% of the zombies within a 300 foot (91.5 m) radius of the initial moan will continue to look around in that immediate area for the next 2D6+3 minutes. If they find humans, the process starts all over again. If they don't find any living beings, the monsters tire of the search and go dormant again or wander away.

## You Must Die to Become a Zombie

Despite the popular myth that a zombie's bite carries some kind of contagious disease or curse that turns the living into one of the walking dead, it's not true. It's a myth fostered by pre-Apocalypse movies and works of fiction.

A zombie has to kill the person, drain him of his life energy, and then, only after the individual has *died*, he rises, several minutes later, to join his killers as one of the walking dead.

**It takes 6-12 minutes (roll 2D4+4) for a person slain by the walking dead to become a zombie himself.** That gives his teammates time to, **a)** smash the slain individual's skull in, **b)** decapitate the corpse, or **c)** blow the brains out. Any such action will prevent a victim of a zombie attack from returning from death as one himself.

Reapers highly recommend you take such measures immediately. Brad Ashley writes:

“Survivors need to come to terms with the fact that a teammate, buddy or loved one has been killed. They need to say their goodbyes fast, and if they don't want him to become a zombie killing machine, they need to take care of business before he rises from the dead. That's more difficult than it might sound. The shock and emotional trauma of losing a loved one can be severe, but you have to do it. You must try to remember that the loved one is gone. Dead, and you only have a few minutes to keep him that way. I recommend you try to look at the body laying before you as the lifeless corpse it is. It's no longer your friend, husband, daughter, parent, it's just another nameless, faceless body that needs to be dealt with before it turns into a monster. A monster with the face of someone you love. Do it fast and know it is the right thing to be done. This may sound heartless, but it is a necessity. Hesitate and more lives may be lost, including your own.” – *Brad Ashley, Leader of the Reapers*

**Note:** The living can only become a zombie if slain by one. Death by any other means – disease, infection, accident, blood loss, being slain at the hands of another human being or animal, suicide, etc., is final. The individual will *not* rise as a zombie.

## The Myth That Won't Die

**The Zombie Bite Myth.** Brad Ashley, Leader of the Reapers, writes this about the *Zombie Bite Myth*:

“A zombie's bite does not turn a living person into one of the walking dead. Trust me on this. I've killed enough zombies and seen enough friends die at their hands to know the truth. A zombie has to kill the person for him to rise as one of the walking dead. Thing is, many survivors of the *Zombie Apocalypse* don't

know that. They have seen too many old zombie movies and believe the popular myth that a zombie's bite infects or curses the victim of a bite or scratch and transforms the poor soul into a zombie within 48 hours. Again, I'm telling you, it doesn't work that way. Sure, a bite or deep scratch is bad and can cause all kinds of trouble if it's not tended to immediately and properly, but all that's going to do is kill a man, not transform him into a zombie.

"This *pervasive, and just plain incorrect belief*, is bad news for those who get bitten, because the conventional wisdom of the *Zombie Bite Myth* is the wound must be quickly cleaned and cauterized, or better yet, the bitten limb (hand, arm, leg, foot) should be *amputated!* As the myth goes, when the victim of a zombie bite turns into the walking dead, he's going to attack his companions and kill them or turn them into zombies with his bite. Rather than risk that horrible fate, people believe it is better to amputate the infected arm. An act they think will stop the victim of the bite from becoming a zombie in the first place. Lives saved all around. It's a terrible thing what fear and ignorance can inflict. I've seen plenty of maimed people to testify to that."

– Brad Ashley, *Leader of the Reapers*

For those who believe the myth, *cleaning and cauterizing* are thought to have only a 40% chance of working, while *amputation* is said to have an 80% likelihood of success in preventing the victim from turning into one of the walking dead. Taking no action is almost certain doom, as it is said that 90% of those bitten or clawed will turn into zombies within 48 hours (4D6+18 hours), unless there is some attempt to treat or remove the wound. Ironically, amputation of a zombie bitten limb kills 33-50% of the people subjected to it. This is due largely to the lack of skilled surgeons, proper medical facilities, medicine, cleaning and follow up care.

A zombie's bite is dangerous and usually causes a nasty infection that looks pretty scary. Furthermore, symptoms such as numbness, discoloration, loss of concentration and focus, etc., may seem to suggest the victim is, indeed, turning into a zombie. While an untreated zombie's bite won't really turn a character into a zombie, it is likely to get infected and cause serious illness and side effects. In fact, a bad infection *may* end up requiring amputation of the infected limb to save the victim. **Note:** Should a bite victim later die of his wound or infection, he does NOT return as the walking dead.

## A Zombie's Bite is Dangerous

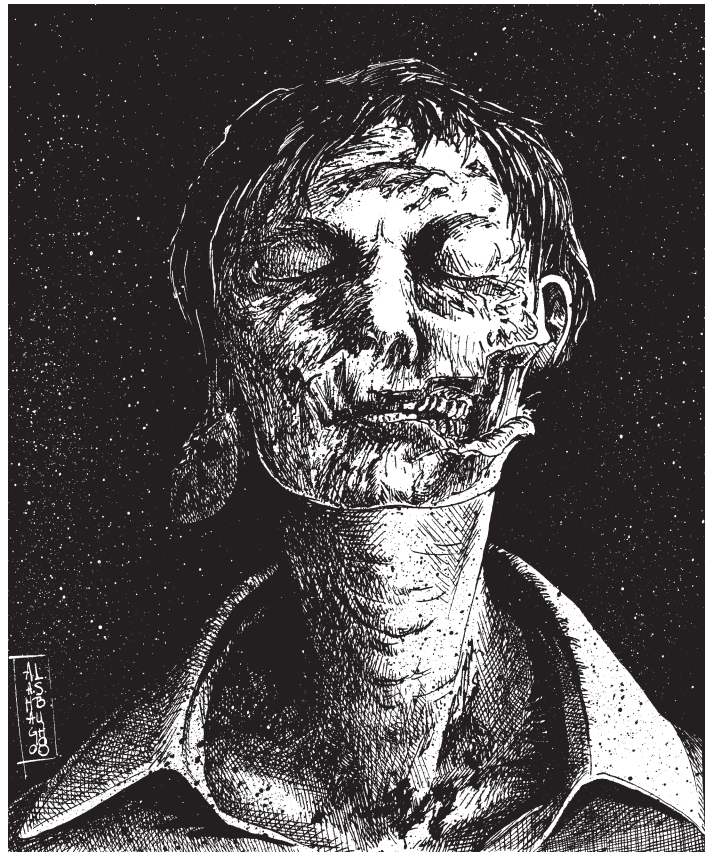
"Not treating a zombie bite immediately is probably a death sentence for most people. Don't be a fool or a hero, because you'll end up dead. And we need all the live bodies we can get."

– Brad Ashley, *Leader of the Reapers*

Though a zombie's bite or claw attack that cuts deep and draws blood may not turn a human into *one of them*, the bite is filthy and can cause serious infection. To avoid illness and the risk of losing a limb or facing death from infection, the wound should be treated quickly and thoroughly.

Treatment requires washing the wound out with soap and water (yes, it hurts), and if you have it, treated with antiseptic or alcohol, antibiotics, and covered with clean bandages. Large

wounds may require suturing, and the bite victim or his associates must make sure the bandages are changed 2-3 times a day, the wound cleaned with each change of dressing, and the dirty bandages replaced with clean ones. This must be done for a full week (7 days) or until the wound begins to heal nicely without signs of infection (1D4+3 days), whichever comes first. The first 4-7 days are the most critical, and if the wound starts to heal without infection, the danger has passed, unless it is re-opened or gets dirty. First Aid Antibiotic Ointment such as Neosporin should reduce healing time by half. Use the following tables as necessary.



## Likelihood of Infection

**01-10%** when the wound is treated promptly, thoroughly and properly, as described above, as well as kept clean for that initial week.

**01-33%** when the wound is initially treated, but care is not continued or is poorly administered, or the wound is exposed to unsanitary conditions afterward.

**01-40%** when the wound is not cleaned well or is poorly treated (no antiseptic or clean bandages) in the first place, or if the bandages are changed but not as often as required, or bandages are swapped out with torn pieces of cloth/rags rather than medical bandages, or when changed under dirty conditions in the field.

**01-65%** chance for infection if the wound is not cleaned and treated within the first hour of getting it, but is treated within 24 hours.

**01-80%** likelihood of infection if the wound is barely attended to at all initially, or if cleaning and follow-up treatment after the initial cleaning is not maintained daily.

**01-96% Infection is a near certainty when the wound is not treated,** or just bandaged and ignored.

## Infection Symptoms and Penalties

Game Masters may pick whichever one seems appropriate or roll for a random determination (use percentile dice).

**01-20% Mild Infection:** The arm aches and the wound has areas that ooze pus and are nasty looking. If not properly treated in the next 48 hours it will turn into a Severe Infection. Proper treatment requires antibiotics, removal of the pus, thorough re-cleaning, new clean bandages and regular care and cleaning as noted previously

**21-40% Severe Infection:** The wound is pus-filled and terrible looking, and the area around it is red, swollen, and hurts to the touch. The victim has low fever that spikes several degrees when the character exerts himself.

Penalties: -1 on initiative, -2 on Perception Rolls, -1 on all combat rolls, and -10% on the performance of any skill.

**Note:** Requires immediate and thorough treatment, and because it got so bad, it takes 1D6+7 additional days to get the infection under control and the wound to start to heal properly. During that time all penalties remain in force. Bed rest is suggested, but not necessary. Keeping the wound clean is required. *If the wound is exposed to filth or is left untreated,* it worsens in 1D4+1 days to one of the following (roll percentile dice): **01-35% Severe Infection and Muscle Damage. 36-70% Gangrene. 71-00% Zombie Rot.**

**41-60% Severe Infection and Muscle Damage:** Same as *Severe Infection*, above, plus the wound has grown in size by 50% and deeper, down into the muscle tissue. This results in a loss of strength in that limb, and the entire limb aches, from fingers to shoulder (or toes to hip).

Penalties: Same penalties as *Severe Infection*, above, plus the P.S. and P.P. (or P.S. and Spd if a foot or leg) of the infected limb are reduced by half. *If a hand or arm,* adjust P.S., P.S. damage bonuses and P.P. bonuses to strike, parry and dodge accordingly. Furthermore, skills requiring aiming (reduce usual bonuses by one quarter), or manual dexterity and/or hand or arm strength are performed with a penalty of -20%; this includes most Electrical, Mechanical, Medical, Physical, Rogue and Wilderness skills.

*If a foot or leg,* adjust the P.S. and Spd accordingly – reduce Spd by 25%, -2 to dodge, and skills that require leg strength, sure-footedness, or stealth, such as Climb, Prowl, Swimming and Tailing, are -20%.

**Note:** Requires immediate and thorough treatment, and because it got so badly infected, it takes 2D4+10 additional days to get the infection under control and the wound to start to heal properly. During that time all penalties remain in force. Bed rest is suggested, but not necessary. Keeping the wound clean is required. *If the wound is exposed to filth or is left untreated,* it worsens in 1D4+1 days. Double all penalties and reduce S.D.C. by half, and Hit Points are -1D6+10. Left untreated, this individual will require amputation of his limb or he will die. The character loses 1D4 Hit Points every day the wound is left untreated or not properly cared for. Bed rest and professional medical care for one week are strongly suggested.

**61-80% Gangrene:** The wound is ulcerated, parts of it look as if it is rotting, it has grown to three times its original size, the entire limb is red, swollen, feels hard and is painful to the touch. The infection has spread into the blood and the character is feverish and feels weak.

Penalties: -4 on initiative, -5 on Perception Rolls, reduce Spd and all combat bonuses by half, including W.P. bonuses, and -25% on the performance of any skill.

*If a hand or arm is gangrenous,* the limb hangs limp and any skills that require the use of that limb take great effort, twice as long, and are performed with an additional penalty of -25% (that's a total skill penalty of -50%); this includes most Electrical, Mechanical, Medical, Physical, Rogue and Wilderness skills.

*If a foot or leg is gangrenous,* the limb is numb, can barely move, and the character walks with an obvious and painful limp. Reduce Spd by 75%, -5 to dodge, and skills that require leg strength, sure-footedness, or stealth, such as Climb, Prowl, Swimming and Tailing, are -50%.

**Note:** Requires immediate and thorough treatment, and because it got so bad, it takes 3D4+12 additional days to get the infection under control and the wound to start to heal properly. During that time all penalties remain in force. Hospitalization and bed rest during that time are strongly suggested! *If the wound is exposed to filth or is left untreated,* it worsens in 1D4+1 days. At that point, the limb must be amputated of the victim will die. Amputation puts the character into a coma and the player must roll to Save vs Coma and Death.

**81-00% Zombie Rot:** The wound closes and seems to heal, but the flesh and muscle *underneath* the skin rots away to create a pus-filled pocket four times larger than the wound's original size. Furthermore, the entire limb turns pale green and feels cold to the touch, like that of a corpse. The character suffers from intermittent numbness and shooting pain in the infected limb, and from a low, but constant fever.

Penalties: -4 on initiative, -2 on Perception Rolls, reduce P.S., P.E., and Spd attributes by 30%; adjust bonuses accordingly. Also reduce S.D.C. by half, Hit Points by 20%, and -15% on the performance of any skill. All penalties remain in effect until the wound starts to heal. Left untreated it only gets worse and has terrible consequences.

**Note:** To heal requires the pus-filled mass to be lanced (cut open) and then all the green pus squeezed out. This is incredibly painful and inflicts 3D6+2 points of damage direct to Hit Points. The wound must then be cleaned and treated as usual, with proper follow up care. Since it got so bad, it takes 2D4+10 additional days to get the wound to heal properly. During that time all penalties remain in force, and Hit Points and S.D.C. lost to infection *do not heal* until the infection is brought under control the wound starts to heal. Hospitalization and bed rest during that time are strongly suggested! *If the wound is exposed to filth or is left untreated,* it worsens in 1D4+1 days. At that point, the character collapses into a coma and the player must roll to Save vs Coma and Death. If the character survives, roll on the following table for permanent side effects.

01-10% Lucked out, no permanent damage.

11-25% Emotional trauma, roll for one random Phobia and the character is -1 to save vs Horror Factor and Insanity.



26-40% Permanently reduce Spd attribute by 10%.

41-60% Permanently reduce P.B. attribute by 10%.

61-75% Permanently reduce S.D.C. by 20%.

76-90% Permanently reduce P.E. attribute by 10% and the character is -2 to save vs infectious disease.

91-00% Becomes a *Half-Living!* Provided the G.M. allows it. If not, re-roll.

## Save vs Disease/Poison

When a character gets an infection or catches any disease, he gets to make a *saving throw vs disease* after treatment. This is basically the same as save vs lethal poison. Since the infection is not initially life threatening, the character must roll a **14 or higher to save**.

If the wound is not treated, the character still gets to roll to save vs disease, but does so with a penalty of -3 to save.

A successful save means he suffers the penalties listed under the symptoms of each type of infection for half the usual period, the infection heals in half the usual time, and the original wound also heals. **Note:** P.E. attribute bonuses apply to saving vs disease.

# Zombie Attributes

Unless stated otherwise in the specific zombie's description, most walking dead have the same fundamental abilities.

## Zombie Intelligence

With a few exceptions, the vast majority of zombies (84%) are dumb as a brick. They have no memories of their life as a human, no past love or loyalties, no skills, no hobbies, no goals, and no desire other than to feast on the living. They are deadly, but dumb, slow moving creatures of pure instinct. The walking dead have one purpose: Roam, find human prey, call out to their brethren, converge, kill, feed, and repeat.

Zombies cannot read, count, tell time, drive a car, operate even simple machinery, or recognize patterns. They don't know, or care, what day it is, where they live or how they got there. All this adds up to a fast-thinking human being able to outsmart, trick or elude most zombies rather easily, provide he doesn't get overwhelmed by sheer numbers, or press his luck by getting too cocky.

Simple Tasks: Most zombies can turn a doorknob, open a door or dresser drawer, flick a light switch on or off, open a window, climb stairs or a ladder, and that's about it. If the door or window is stuck, locked or nailed shut, the zombie may try to break it down by pounding on it and throwing its weight against it, especially if there are many zombies converging at one area. Likewise, zombies will smash out a window, or tear down planks if boarded up, to climb through it. If unable to open or smash down a door or boarded up window, the undead is likely to pound and batter the door, window or obstacle like a wind up toy without any other options.

Following Orders and Commands: The walking dead have no leaders, no social structure or pecking order. They wander in search of prey or go dormant when there is no prey to be had. They don't generally understand human language, don't listen to

arguments, pleas or threats of any kind, nor follow orders or demands – they are too animalistic.

However, there are a few beings who can gather a small number of zombies (a handful to several hundred) and get them to follow them and obey simple orders. This includes *Death Cult Priests*, *Thinker Zombies* and *Mock Zombies*. Even for them, the zombies they command can only understand and obey orders and instructions on the most rudimentary level; roughly equivalent to a moderately well trained dog. The rare being who can command zombies can get his walking dead to follow behind him, stop, wait, go in the direction he tells them, tear down barricades, move objects/debris out of the way, carry or drag heavy loads, get them to attack, kill, and capture rather than automatically kill (which is very difficult for a zombie). He can also get them to stand guard with the simple order to kill all who enter or try to leave, as well as get them to kill/attack on command. That's pretty much it. Zombies aren't even as smart as "circus dogs" who can learn tricks and perform amazing feats. In fact, without regular supervision and reinforcement of their duty, zombie minions are likely to forget what they were told to do and wander off and go about their usual aimless wandering.

Zombies are Single-Minded and Relentless: If the walking dead have converged on a location because prey was seen entering it, and especially if the zombie horde can *sense* life inside, all continue to moan, some continue to hammer, batter, pull and scratch at the deterrents blocking their entrance, while others wander around the building looking for obvious alternative ways inside and testing other doors and boarded windows. Sooner or later, and it may take an hour or several hours, the zombies' battering attacks are likely to break down most doors and barricades, unless they are reinforced from the inside.

Zombie Siege: Zombies are relentless in the pursuit of food. When they *know* prey is at a particular location or they can sense the presence of human life (P.P.E.), they test the limits of the structures holding them at bay and continue to do so for *1D6+2 hours*. Even after that 3-8 hour period, only *1D6x10%* of the monsters wander away. The rest linger for another *1D6* hours, wandering around the building softly groaning in frustration, or stand and wait for an opening to lay siege again or snare anyone who tries to make a break for freedom. **Note:** The zombie siege with the constant pounding, thumping, moaning, and threat of death has the same effect on the humans inside as psychological warfare, not that the zombies are aware of it. The people inside are likely to be unable to sleep due to the unceasing noise and fear, and some may be driven into shock, tears, hysteria and even madness.

Zombies Get Bored and Leave When They Can't Sense P.P.E. or See Their Intended Victim: When a location is surrounded by a small group of zombies (less than 50), the survivors' best bet is to stay away from windows and get out of the zombies' sensing range (25+ feet/7.6+ m). If people can hide, stay quiet and get out of sensing range, most will leave after 15 minutes and the *2D6%* that linger leave *2D6+10* minutes after that. If they can't sense, see or hear food, they wander away to find some.

However, if the zombies *know* even one person is inside, and can hear, see, smell or sense him – especially if they can see or sense him – they will gather by the hundreds (*2D4x100*) and stay for *2D4+8* hours; some (*2D6%*) will linger for *1D6* days or

until the life source leaves. However, if the zombies catch even a glimpse, wisp or brief moment of sensing the human life inside, it starts the entire countdown cycle over again.

During the initial zombie siege, one third of the walking dead actively try to break down doors and barriers preventing them from gaining access to their prey. They also search for other ways inside. Another one third walk around, circling the structure moaning, banging on the walls and tearing at gutters and shutters. The rest wait a short distance (100-200 yards/meters) away, shuffling their feet and watching until there is some reason to press forward or attack.

**Zombies Seldom Use Weapons and Tools:** A zombie no longer recognizes the value or purpose of most tools, weapons and devices. The monster may (12% chance), however, realize that it can use a nearby chair, table leg, pipe, hammer, wrench, rock, bone, length of wood, gun and similar objects as a *bludgeon* to smash open windows and doors, or to club the living to death. Likewise, a zombie might, often by chance, pick up and use an axe, sword, knife or other blade weapon to chop at a door or obstruction, or to stab human prey. HOWEVER, the use of such an object as a weapon of opportunity is pure chance. It was there, the zombie saw it, picked it up and used it. A zombie is more likely to pick up a chair and toss it out of its way or walk over a weapon or tool than use it. Most don't even notice the weapon or tool.

With the rare exception of some *Zombie Aberrations*, the creatures do not keep weapons, tools, or possessions of any kind. They see no value in, or purpose for them. Possessions are meaningless to zombies. However, the dumb things may pick up and carry items around for 2D6 hours for no apparent reason. Thus, a zombie may be seen holding a severed arm, bone, piece of wood, hacksaw, pot or pan, bicycle handlebars, an empty bottle, book, toy, hat, dog leash, etc. Presumably this is just some reflex action, nothing more.

**Only Aberrations May Deliberately Use Weapons and Tools:** Only 6% of zombies use a weapon, be it club or blade, on a regular basis, and they are limited to the rare *Thinker*, *Pattern* and *Mock Zombie*. These *Zombie Aberrations* can remember the purpose/use or figure out how to use simple weapons, tools and

devices. All other walking dead use objects only by chance when the item is laying out in the open. When done with it, the monsters usually drop it and walk away. **Note:** See the specific zombie descriptions for the different behavior and abilities of *Zombie Aberrations*.

## Zombie Mental Endurance

Zombies are instinctive killing machines, like sharks, that wander the land looking for prey to kill. Feeding is their sole purpose, so even though the M.E. attribute is low, they are relentless in their pursuit of prey and aren't afraid of much of anything. They don't have goals or desires and do not feel loss or fear as humans do, so there is nothing to negotiate or threaten them with.

**Zombies fear fire.** The walking dead are utterly fearless, except when it comes to fire. Even a handheld, burning torch will cause most zombies to back away 1D4+4 feet (1.5 to 2.4 m). However, as zombies gather and converge, inevitably one will grab at the human from behind or lash out and knock the fire from his hand. Zombies may back away from fearsome fire, but they don't run away. Thus, a circle of fire will keep even hundreds of zombies at bay on the other side of the flame, provided the fire is at least two feet (0.6 m) tall (3-4 feet/0.9 to 1.2 m is better). The problem is the zombies don't leave, they just keep their distance and wait for the fire to die out. Furthermore, they continue to moan the whole time, attracting more and more zombies.

As the number of zombies grows, the people protected by fire may find themselves trapped. For example, while a circle of fire holds the zombies at a distance, the horrid creatures continue to moan, attracting more zombies to the area and surrounding the fiery circle. They moan, shuffle about, and wait for the flames to die out so they can converge to make the kill. When the fire dies out or diminishes to a point that isn't as scary to the walking dead, the humans within the fading circle of flame may be facing a zombie horde of hundreds, 10-50 undead deep; impossible to escape from without an airlift.

On the other hand, a flamethrower will part a mass of zombies like Moses parting the Dead Sea. Again, the problem is the



zombies will immediately close ranks behind any characters attempting to flee through the momentary opening, as well as strike from behind and the sides. A zombie's hunger and lust for human life keeps the monsters focused on their prize – killing humans and drinking in their life energy.

Horror Factor of Fire: 16; fire is the only thing that scares zombies.

## Mental Affinity

None to speak of. Zombies are walking corpses. They don't love, care for, relate to, or covet other people or possessions. Retro-Savages say that makes them *pure*.

Zombies instinctively get along with each other and don't fight or compete among themselves, they just do what instinct tells them to do: wander, hunt, alert other zombies to prey, and kill the living. Only the rare Zombie Aberration may have a high Mental Affinity (for a zombie) and any kind of personality (see *Thinker* and *Mock Zombie*).

## Zombie Physical Strength

For some reason, when an ordinary human dies and returns as one of the walking dead, his Physical Strength is doubled.

**If the average male (50%)** has a P.S. of 10-15, that means the average zombie has a P.S. of 20-30.

**If a strong male (30%)** has a P.S. of 17-24, a strong zombie has a P.S. of 34-48.

**Even a puny male (20%), teen or child** with a P.S. of 3-9, means a weak zombie has a P.S. of 6-18.

**The typical female (65%)** has a P.S. of 8-12, which means most female zombies have a P.S. of 16-24! (10% fall under the *puny* category above, 15% of female zombies are equal the average *male*, and 10% are equal to a *strong male*.)

## Zombie Physical Prowess

With the exception of some of the Zombie Aberrations, the vast majority have slow to average eye to hand coordination, reflexes, and agility. *Fast Attack Zombies* and *Flesh-Eating Zombies* are two notable exceptions. Both are faster and much more agile than other zombies. See the specific descriptions of Zombie Aberrations for details.

## Physical Endurance

**They are the "walking dead,"** which means bullets, blades and punches do no or little damage. Zombies are also *impervious* to heat and cold, they don't need to breathe air (so noxious odors, toxic gas, smoke, tear gas, and pollution have no effect), and disease does not affect them. Zombies can also survive in a vacuum and underwater, and poison, drugs, fatigue, Horror Factor, insanity (and most forms of mind control) have no effects on the monsters.

**Extreme cold temperatures (below freezing).** Zombies operating in climates or winter seasons at temperatures below freezing see their Spd and number of attacks reduced by half, but they are otherwise unaffected. Walking dead that go dormant are likely (92% chance) to become frozen stiff and may appear to be dead. In fact, a zombie can be frozen inside a block of ice and still survive. The creature remains inert, in suspended

animation until thawed out. When thawed out, the zombie springs to motion with murderous intent.

**Zombies can't swim,** but they can't drown either. They can hold on to wreckage and let the current of the water carry them someplace, or they can walk along the bottom of lakes, rivers, seas, and even oceans. Zombies can remain underwater indefinitely. An underwater zombie, or zombie horde, may try to climb up anchors, netting or dock piers, or walk along until they find a shallow or beach along the shore to dry land. If lost at sea on a vessel or underwater, most zombies "go dormant."

**Fire can kill zombies.** Fire consumes and destroys zombies, so the monsters fear it. However, fire is not an ideal means of killing the walking dead. See *Zombie Mental Endurance* (previous) and the section on *Fighting Zombies #13* for more details about zombies and fire.

**Weapon Damage.** Unless a roll to strike is higher than the zombie's *Natural A.R. 14* (15 and higher), it doesn't matter what the weapon is, it inflicts *no damage*. You can stab, hit or shoot a zombie all day without inflicting damage unless your roll to strike is 15 (with modifiers/bonuses) or higher.

The best weapons to use are blunt, curved blades, and guns that inflict heavy damage.

**Fisticuffs and Kicks:** Punches, kicks, head butts, and all other types of physical attacks only inflict 20% their normal damage against a zombie, even on a head shot or blow to the neck.

**Straight bladed weapons** (swords, ice pick, and most knives) and any "stabbing or impaling attack" do half damage. Plus, there is a 01-60% chance that a stabbing weapon gets *stuck in* the zombie, requiring effort (one melee action) to pull it out. An effort that uses up one melee attack/action to yank it out, the attacker loses initiative, and the zombie has that moment to attack his assailant!

**Blade Weapons Used in a Chopping Attack:** Curved swords, machetes, axes and other chopping weapons do *full damage*, though they require a "Called Shot" to hit a specific limb, neck or head.

**Blunt Weapons:** Bludgeoning attacks with clubs, maces, crowbars, shovels, and other blunt weapons inflict full damage, but require a "Called Shot" to hit a specific limb, neck or head.

**Low Caliber Guns (.22 to .38 caliber):** Have minimal effect and inflict *half damage* to the main body and limbs, and only *10% damage* to the head and neck.

**Shotguns and Heavy Weapons:** Shotgun blasts (full slug, not scatter shot), dum-dum rounds, hollow/soft-point rounds, explosive bullets, medium and heavy machine-gun rounds do full damage, though they require a "Called Shot" to hit a specific limb, neck or head.

**Combat Note:** See the sections on *Armor Rating, S.D.C., S.D.C. by Location*, and *Hit Points* for more details on hitting and destroying zombies.

## Physical Beauty

Zombies are walking corpses, and show signs of decomposition, gashes, bite marks, claw marks, cuts, stab wounds, entry and exit wounds from bullets, bruising, and rot. The worst of the lot may have missing body parts, glass or objects sticking out of their bodies, missing or rotting flesh, their entrails hanging out,

and so on. ALL have sunken eyes, skin drained of color or turned green, and, well, look dead and decomposing.

However, not all zombies are hideous monsters. The recently deceased and newly risen may look pale, but otherwise human and healthy. Likewise, a zombie that feeds on a regular basis may look “fresh” and deceptively healthy, even attractive (+1D4+4 to P.B.). However, such attractive looking zombies are in the minority (10-15%), and even they exhibit the usual zombie traits: slow shuffling gait, dead eyes, an inability to speak words, the moan, and a relentless desire to kill. Also see the *Mock Zombie Pretender*.

## Zombie Speed

In most cases, zombies are slow, shambling creatures who cannot run or leap. They can climb over debris mounds, up hills, and through open windows, but have difficulty climbing vertical walls, trees and rope. The Spd attribute of the most common zombie, the *Sloucher* (74%), is 1D6+6 (average Spd 9), and *Crawlers* (10%) are even slower, but better climbers. A few *Zombie Aberrations*, most notably the *Fast Attack Zombie* (5%) and *Flesh-Eater* (5%), are much faster and can climb and leap, but they are comparatively rare. See *Zombie Descriptions* for details.

## Zombie Senses

**Zombie sense of hearing.** Zombies have surprisingly sharp hearing and are attracted to sound. A walking dead that hears noise will investigate, and all zombies recognize the sound of human voices, laughter, crying, shouting, singing, sneezing, snoring, footsteps, etc. The monsters may no longer understand what is being said, but they know the source is human. Likewise, they know the sound of gunfire, vehicles, engines and other machine sounds are likely to indicate the presence of human prey. To zombies, the sounds humans make all equate to one thing: prey is nearby, find them and kill.

Walking dead are especially attuned to the *Zombie’s Moan* and can triangulate its point of origin and approximate distance within 30 seconds (two melee rounds). Unless the moan stops within that 30 second period, the walking dead who have heard it and plotted its location will continue to come to investigate. Only after 15 minutes of silence and uneventful searching will the monsters give up and wander off.

Humans can try to hide from zombies, but in addition to their keen hearing, the monsters also have a good sense of smell (better than a human’s, not as good as a canine’s), sense life energy within 25 feet (7.6 m; see P.P.E. section for details) and see the human aura as a radiant light. Consequently, humans shine out in darkness and must take extra measures to hide from zombies.

**Zombie sense of smell.** Zombies have a reasonably good sense of smell and use it to track human prey. Human beings have a strong distinctive scent, especially if they have been exerting themselves (like fighting or running away from zombies) or haven’t bathed in several days (common in the post-apocalyptic world). The animalistic zombies instantly recognize the scent of humans, as well as the scent of blood. Thankfully, their olfactory sense is not good enough to track people like a bloodhound, but if a zombie catches wind of a hu-

man, it will investigate and may be able to track him to his hiding place by scent (low ability).

**Recognize Human Scents:** 83%. This also tells the zombie that humans are nearby, or have been present recently.

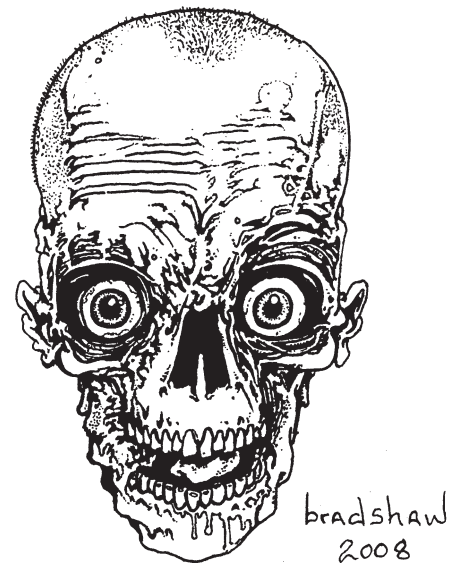
**A Zombie’s Ability to Track Humans by Scent:** 18% chance, +10% if the character has been exerting himself and is sweaty or has been sweating, or hasn’t bathed in three or more days, +10% if his wounds have bled/follow blood scent, +5% if there is more than one human, +5% if someone is wearing perfume, cologne or aftershave. All bonuses are accumulative.

**Zombies Smell Fear in Humans:** The walking dead can smell fear. When they do, it drives them into an even more aggressive state of mind and gives them the following bonuses: +1 on initiative, and +1 to strike or disarm. If the level of fear is fever pitched or there are several (five or more) terrified people, the zombies are +1 attack per melee around.

**Zombie sense of taste.** With the exception of *Flesh-Eating Zombies*, the rest have virtually no sense of taste. A fact that torments the *Mock Zombie*, who wants to believe it is still human. Poor taste buds has no impact on the other zombies as they no longer eat food nor cling to their past, human lives. They draw sustenance from life energy (P.P.E.) not physical food. Having little ability to taste also enables zombies to use biting attacks without hesitation due to a foul taste.

**Zombie sense of touch.** The necrotic flesh of the walking dead has minimal sensation. Cold, heat, and wind are barely noticed. Likewise, physical blows, stabbings, cuts, bullets and most other attacks are hardly felt. Even when a zombie gets cut in half or blown to pieces, it hardly feels a thing. The zombies’ lack of physical sensation works in their favor, making them unstoppable killing machines that keep coming no matter what.

Only fire burns and hurts them terribly, hence the creatures’ fear of it and why even a single flaming torch can hold a score of zombies at bay. **Note:** See *Zombie Mental Endurance* (previous) and see *Fighting Zombies* for more details about zombies and fire.



**Zombie vision.** The eyes of the walking dead are usually cloudy and vision is fair to poor. Consequently, zombies tend to rely on their keen sense of hearing, smell and ability to *see and sense life energy* as much, or more than, their eyesight. Remem-

ber, the human aura is like a neon sign to the walking dead, especially at night.

## Zombie Armor Rating (A.R. 14)

“Look, zombies are not like living people. They are dead and don’t feel pain or fear like we do. You can take off a zombie’s arm with a machete, blow off its leg with a shotgun, and the damn thing barely flinches and keeps on coming. The head and brain is the target you’re looking for. Don’t waste your time on anything else, unless it’s to break free of a zombie’s grip. Sure, in that case take off its hand and run. Otherwise, think head shot.”

– Brad Ashley, *Leader of the Reapers*

The body of a zombie can endure severe punishment and still keep coming. That means most attacks, including bullets, do little or no damage to a zombie.

A zombie’s *Natural Armor Rating (A.R.)* reflects its body’s ability to soak up or shrug off most types of damage.

### Here’s how it works in a game context:

When a player character rolls to strike a zombie opponent, he or she uses a twenty sided die (D20). When going up against zombies, any roll between 6-14 may hit the monster, but the zombie doesn’t feel the impact, doesn’t feel pain, and does NOT take damage! It keeps on coming.

**An attacker must roll a 15 or higher** (be sure to include bonuses to strike from P.P. attributes 16 and up, Hand to Hand Combat skill, and applicable W.P. skill) in order to hit and *inflict damage* to a zombie. Damage is inflicted because the roll to strike exceeded the Natural A.R.

**Undirected attacks** (“I blast the mother with my shotgun!”) inflict damage to the zombie’s *main body S.D.C.* Reducing the S.D.C. of the *main body* to zero or below causes two things to happen.

One, reduce the zombie’s Natural A.R., number of attacks per melee, combat bonuses, P.S. and Spd *by half*.

Two, the zombie’s Hit Points are exposed. Destroy the Hit Points (reduce to zero or below) and the zombie stops moving and falls over.

Here’s the deal, a downed zombie is not a dead one. They are the “walking dead.” How does one kill the walking dead? Depleting the S.D.C. and Hit Points to zero only stops the zombie temporarily. After an hour the apparently dead zombie will have healed enough to rise from the dead, again, and continue its existence as a wandering killing machine. Only decapitating a zombie or destroying its brains will kill the horror once and for all. See *Targeted Attacks*, which follows, on how to do it.

## S.D.C. & Zombies

S.D.C. is the Structural Damage Capacity – the damage – a zombie can take before it starts to affect the monster’s Hit Points.

Being reanimated corpses, we’ve given the limbs, neck and head of zombies S.D.C. by Location.

## Targeted Attacks

“Always have a plan of attack in mind. Be decisive. Choose your targets well, and do what has to be done, and do it quickly.”

– Brad Ashley, *Leader of the Reapers*

Rather than just shoot or attack a zombie opponent at random, hacking and slashing and letting blows fall where they will (main body), a character may *announce* that he is trying to target a *specific body part* of the zombie. (**Note:** Applicable to fighting zombies ONLY.) “Sam the Hound Master is aiming for the wrist to blow off the zombie’s hand.” Or, “My Reaper is going for a head shot!”

**This is known as a “Called Shot.”** The player announces his intended target (hand, arm, foot, leg, neck or head), then rolls to strike as usual on a twenty-sided die (D20).

**A successful strike** (a roll above the A.R. 14) hits and does damage to the body location announced. The designated target area of the body takes ALL the damage from that attack. If the damage inflicted depletes the location’s S.D.C., that limb (hand, arm, foot, leg) is cut, chopped, bashed or shot off the zombie’s body, and it drops to the ground! Being an animated corpse, the zombie ignores the loss of a limb and continues its attack.

**A failed strike** (below the A.R. 14) either misses, or hits, but does no damage to the walking corpse.

**Attacks made without announcing a “Called Shot”** go to the main body. The main body is the trunk of the body.

**S.D.C. by Location** indicates the damage capacity of that body location. The asterisk indicates how to attack, any possible penalties inflicted from a successful strike, and the effects on the zombie from the loss of that body part.

## S.D.C. by Location

- \* Hands (2) – 1D6+4 each
- \* Arms (2) – 1D8+6 each
- \* Feet (2) – 1D6+4 each
- \* Legs (2) – 2D6+6 each
- \* Lower Jaw – 1D6+3
- \*\* Neck – 1D6+10
- \*\* Head – 2D6+14
- \*\*\* Main Body – 3D6+30

### \* Inflicting Damage to a Particular Body Location: Limb.

1. To target a specific limb/location requires a “Called Shot.” That means the player must *announce* his character’s intention to attempt to strike, hit, shoot, chop off, etc., that *particular limb* or area of the body. Such attacks require a roll of 15 or higher, as the roll of a 5-14 is absorbed by the zombie’s A.R. 14, and a roll of 1-4 is a miss.

2. Roll to *strike* as usual. Include your character’s combined bonuses to strike (a high P.P., Hand to Hand Combat skill, and W.P. skill may all provide a bonus to strike). Most zombies are too slow to parry or dodge, so the attack automatically hits in most cases. The description of the *Zombie Aberrations* will indi-

cate if the creature has a bonus to parry or dodge incoming attacks.

3. If the number to strike is higher than the Zombie's A.R. 14, the attack hits and does damage. If the number rolled to strike is 14 or less, the attack does NO DAMAGE.

4. If the "Called Shot" was successful (a roll of 15 or higher), the attack struck the intended body location and does damage. Roll to determine the damage. Make sure any bonuses to damage (typically from a high P.S. or Hand to Hand Combat skill) are applied. **Note:** A Natural Twenty (the number twenty, rolled on a twenty-sided die/D20, *before* any bonuses or modifiers are added) always hits the intended target/location and does *double damage* to a zombie's limbs or main body. (*Triple damage* to the neck and head/skull.)

If the damage inflicted depletes the location's S.D.C. that limb (hand, arm, foot, leg) is cut, chopped, bashed or shot off the zombie, and it drops to the ground! Being an animated corpse, the zombie feels little pain, no sense of loss, ignores it, and continues its attack.

**Penalties from loss of limb:** Destroying a zombie's limbs reduces its mobility and number of attacks.

**Reduced mobility:** Eliminating an arm reduces the zombie's attacks per melee by one. Eliminating both arms drops it to two *bite attacks* (2D6 damage) or *head butts* (2D4 damage) per melee round, or the usual number of *kick attacks* minus one for lack of balance.

Eliminating one of the zombie's legs reduces speed by half. Eliminating both legs turns the zombie into a Crawler and it is forced to drag itself along the ground by its arms, reducing speed by 80%.

Eliminating both arms and both legs reduces the number of attacks to one *bite attack* (2D6 damage) or *head butt* (2D4 damage) per melee round. Destroying the jaw negates the zombie's bite attack.

A cut or blasted off a limb can be reattached under some circumstances (zombie lovers/death cultists, or madmen may help a zombie, as may a Thinker or Mock Zombie).

**\*\* Inflicting Damage to the Neck or Head:** Fundamentally the same as targeting a limb with a few differences.

1. The player must *announce* his character's intention to attempt to attack the zombie's *neck* or *head*.

2. Roll to strike as usual, only this time *DO NOT include ANY* of your character's usual combined bonuses to strike – "Natural" die roll ONLY!

3. **Strike penalty:** The neck and head are small, moving targets, difficult to strike in the heat of combat. Consequently, the attacker needs to roll a **17-20 to strike**.

4. Only a *Natural die roll* (no bonuses applied) of 17-20 hits!

5. If the number rolled to strike is 17 or higher, it hits and does damage. If the number rolled is a *Natural 20* it does *three times* the usual damage from that weapon. (**Note:** A punch or kick attack only does its normal damage to zombies with a Natural 20, but the zombie is momentarily dazed and loses one melee attack. Otherwise, punches and kicks do 20% their normal damage to a zombie.)

If the number rolled to strike is 15 or 16, the attack misses the head or neck, but hits the main body and does normal damage. A roll of 14 or less does no damage.

6. If a "Called Shot" to **the neck** is successful (a roll of 17 or higher), the attack struck the neck and does damage. If the damage inflicted depletes the S.D.C. of **the neck**, *the head is decapitated!* The zombie's lifeless body crumples to the ground and the head rolls away. The zombie is, *in effect*, dead, but will it stay that way?

Decapitating a zombie is an *instant kill* – kinda. Separating a zombie from its head instantly causes the zombie to collapse. In most circumstances, the thing is dead. However, if the head is reattached the zombie immediately starts to recover S.D.C. and Hit Points, and rises from the dead after *one hour*. Removing the head and then destroying it, or burning the head or body, destroying it, is the only way to make the kill permanent.

**If the damage inflicted depletes the S.D.C. of the head**, the skull is fractured and the brain is vulnerable to additional attack. As before, only a Natural D20 roll of 17-20 strikes. If an attack inflicts damage equivalent to the zombie's *full Hit Points* (even if it has already suffered previous Hit Point damage), the skull shatters and the brains are destroyed! The zombie's lifeless body crumples to the ground, *dead*. Permanently dead. Destroy the brains, and the monster dies.

**Head shot "instant kill."** An instant kill happens when the damage inflicted to the head in a single attack is *three times* (3x) the S.D.C. of the head. 16-26 S.D.C. is the range for a zombie's skull. That's 48-78 S.D.C. points of damage *in a single attack* (depending on the individual zombie) that needs to be inflicted in one strike. Otherwise, the attacker must first deplete the S.D.C. of the head and then deplete the full Hit Points to destroy the brain and kill the zombie.

**\*\*\* Depleting the S.D.C. of the main body** to zero or below reduces the zombie's Natural A.R., number of attacks per melee, combat bonuses, P.S. and Spd *by half*. It also exposes the zombie's Hit Points. Each attack from this point forward goes direct to Hit Points. Destroy the Hit Points (reduce to zero or below) and the zombie stops moving, falls over and appears dead. This zombie is out of the combat picture for the moment, and that may be good enough under the circumstances. However, zombies automatically regenerate lost Hit Points and S.D.C., so after an hour, what may have seemed to be a bullet ridden dead zombie, rises from the dead, again, and continues its existence as a wandering killing machine.

## Zombie Hit Points

**Zombie Hit Point Determination:** P.E. attribute number equals the zombie's Hit Points. That's a typical range of *16-21 Hit Points*.

**To get to the Hit Points**, however, the attacker must either deplete all the *Main Body S.D.C.* first and continue the attack on the body, or deplete all the S.D.C. of *the head* first, and continue the attack on the head and brains.

**And the dead will rise again.** As noted in other places, inflicting enough damage to make a zombie collapse and appear dead is *not* the same as killing it. If the head has a brain and the head

remains attached to its body, the zombie will recover Hit Points and S.D.C. and rise again after only one hour.

Destroying a zombie's brain kills it! The only way to kill a zombie, once and for all, is to destroy its brain. See *S.D.C. by Location* for details.

Fire kills too. Actually, fire can destroy the walking dead too, however using fire to kill is tricky and dangerous. See *Fighting Zombies*.

## Recovering Hit Points & S.D.C.

“Zombies are harder to kill than you might think. If you take one down, make sure you do the job right.

“It's not enough to fill a zombie full of holes. You need to remove the head and destroy it, or blow its brains out. I hope that doesn't sound flip, because I don't intend it to be, but those are the facts. The only way to keep the walking dead from coming back to life and hunting humans another day, is to destroy the brains. Leave a zombie with its head intact, and it will be hunting people again in an hour. Leave a zombie separated from its head in two pieces, and you might have a damn Zombie Death Cult Priest reattaching it and bringing the monster back to life. Believe me, it happens. I've seen it. Just one more reason to take down Death Cults and their priests every chance you get.”

– Brad Ashley, *Leader of the Reapers*

Zombies recover S.D.C. and Hit Points in two ways:

**1. Zombies recover 1D6+3 S.D.C. and two Hit Points per hour** without doing anything. Automatic restoration occurs even if the zombie's main body S.D.C. and Hit Points were blasted to zero or below. This means a zombie that collapses into a heap and *appears dead*, will, within one hour, recover enough S.D.C. and Hit Points to rise again (with 1D6+3 S.D.C. and 2 Hit Points)!

As time goes by, the monster regenerates additional lost S.D.C. and Hit Points at a rate of 1D6+3 S.D.C. and two Hit Points per hour until completely healed. **Note:** If the head is removed from its body, a Zombie does not recover lost S.D.C. or Hit Points unless the head is reattached (sewn back on, duct taped back on, etc.). See *Lost or Severed Limbs* below.

**2. Feeding on P.P.E. restores 1D6+1 S.D.C. and one Hit Point** per P.P.E. point eaten. A fraction of one P.P.E. point restores one S.D.C. only.

**Lost or severed limbs are gone forever, at least in most cases.** Zombies are stupid, and losing a limb neither causes them pain nor slows them down. A zombie will step right over its own arm to get at a human being and never think twice about it. The monster simply moves on and adapts to whatever comes its way.

However, if the actual limb, and even a decapitated head, of a zombie is reattached – sewn back on, tied back on, even duct taped or stapled back on – it will *reattach within 24 hours*, as good as new! Until then, the poorly reattached limb may be taped or tied in place but it does not function. In the case of reattaching a *severed head* to a lifeless zombie body, the walking dead comes back to life 1D4+2 melee rounds (45 to 90 seconds) after the head is reattached, but the zombie's attributes, attacks per melee, bonuses, skills, S.D.C. and Hit Points are all *half* the

usual number. The head does not grow back onto the body until 24 hours have passed. Until then, the poorly attached head can be *knocked off* from the body by inflicting half the usual S.D.C. damage to the head or neck. Losing its head, the zombie becomes immediately inert and lifeless. This is why just *chopping off a zombie's head* is not a permanent solution. The zombie's *brain must be destroyed to kill it* without fear of reanimation.

**Note:** Only *Death Cult Priests* and their human supporters, *Thinker Zombies*, *Mock Zombies* and *madmen* would ever consider reattaching a severed head or limb to the zombie it belonged to. Consequently, re-attachment is uncommon, but it does occur. That's also important to note, the correct limb or head must be placed on the correct zombie. Mismatched parts cannot reattach if they are from a different zombie.

# Zombie Descriptions

74% Slouchers

10% Crawlers

5% Fast Attack Zombies (Aberration)

5% Flesh-Eating Zombies (Aberration)

4% Thinker Zombies (Aberration)

1% Pattern Zombies (Aberration)

1% Mock Zombies (Aberration)

**Note:** Also see the Half-Living O.C.C. and Death Cults.

## Slouchers

“Slouchers. Don't be fooled by their slow shuffling gate or blank gaze. There are billions of these walking dead around the world. They are the denizens that fill our cities and towns and haunt our dreams. They are what most people imagine when you say the word ‘zombie.’ Slow, deliberate, relentless, gathering in vast groups to converge on the living and devour us all.

– Brad Ashley, *Leader of the Reapers*

Slouchers are the most numerous type of zombie – the shuffling, shambling, groaning multitude that seems to be everywhere. You could kill 10 million of them and not make a dent, because they *are* everywhere.

Slouchers inhabit the abandoned nooks and crannies of the cities and towns. They wander the streets and freeways, and converge in mind numbing numbers. Indeed, their strength lies in sheer numbers, brute strength and their utter relentlessness. Many a bold scavenger or would-be hero has fallen to these shambling brutes because they saw them as slow, clumsy, and easy to evade. Easy to evade when there are one or two, or even ten or twenty, but not when there are hundreds, or thousands, or tens of thousand converging on your position. Of all the people who died during the Zombie Apocalypse, 74% are Slouchers. Seventy-four percent of every man, woman and child who died in the Wave and the ensuing rise of the dead. That's a huge number.



Slouchers are at their most dangerous in large groups, and since they are everywhere, they gather in massive numbers. They are also formidable in confined spaces where humans have little room to maneuver. Slouchers are also susceptible to the influence of *Death Cult Priests*, *Thinkers* and *Mock Zombies*, who are able to command them, at least for awhile. Of course, Slouchers (and Crawlers) can only follow simple commands and are only really useful at killing, standing guard and hauling away garbage and debris, or carrying or dragging stuff.

**Also known as:** Moaners, Shamblers, the Walking Dead and Zeds.

**Alignment:** Considered Diabolic.

**Attributes:** I.Q. 1D4, M.E. 1D6, M.A. 1D4, P.S. 2x Strength when alive (typically 2D6+18), P.P. 1D6+1, P.E. 1D6+15, P.B. 2D4, Spd 1D4+6.

**Hit Points:** P.E. attribute number, but all Main Body S.D.C. must be depleted first before Hit Points can be affected.

**Note:** See *S.D.C. by Location* and *Hit Points* for more details.

**S.D.C. By Location:**

- \* Hands (2) – 1D6+4 each
- \* Arms (2) – 1D8+6 each
- \* Feet (2) – 1D6+4 each
- \* Legs (2) – 2D6+6 each
- \* Lower Jaw – 1D6+3
- \*\* Neck – 1D6+10
- \*\* Head – 2D6+14
- \*\*\* Main Body – 3D6+30

**Armor Rating:** 14

**Horror Factor:** 13

**P.P.E.** 1D4

**Natural Abilities:** Standard as previously described.

See Life Energy (P.P.E.): 9,000 feet (2,743.2 m) at night or in darkness.

Sense Life Energy (P.P.E.): 25 feet (7.6 m) to sense 1-6 people, 50 feet (15.2 m) to sense a group of 7-24 people, and 100 feet (30.5 m) to sense a group of 25 or more people. Half that range to sense animals. One quarter that range, 6.2 feet (1.9 m), when a zombie is dormant.

Recognize Human Scents: 83%. This also tells the zombie that humans are nearby, or have been present recently.

Track Humans by Scent: 18% chance, +10% if the human is sweaty or hasn't bathed in three or more days, +10% to follow the scent of blood, +5% if there is more than one human present in the same area, +5% to smell perfume, cologne or aftershave. All bonuses are accumulative.

Smell Fear in Humans: Makes zombies more aggressive: +1 on initiative and +1 to strike or disarm. If the level of fear is fever pitched or five or more people are terrified, the zombie is also +1 attack per melee around.

Zombies Can See Without Eyes: The eyes glow with a red light inside empty eye sockets.

Keen Sense of Hearing: Can pinpoint location of a Zombie Moan after hearing it for only 30 seconds.



Impervious to Most Everything: Only decapitation, destroying a zombie's brain, and fire can kill a zombie. Does not need to breathe, and survives underwater and in a vacuum.

S.D.C. and Hit Point Regeneration: 1D6+3 S.D.C. and 2 Hit Points are automatically restored every hour. Extra P.P.E. may also restore S.D.C. and Hit Points at a rate of 1D6+2 S.D.C. and one Hit Point per extra P.P.E. point. See S.D.C. and Hit Points for details.

No Life Energy of Their Own: Zombies are cold, dark creatures without body heat or an aura. They cannot be seen by infrared and thermal imaging optic systems. Rather, zombies register the same as a piece of timber.

Go Dormant: A stasis sleep that keeps zombies from decaying. Walking dead hide when they go dormant and can be waiting anywhere.

People Slain by the Zombie Rise as One: Victims slain in a zombie attack, their P.P.E. absorbed, rise as the walking dead within 2D4+4 minutes after expiration.

**Skill of Note:** Climb 35%/20%.

**Attacks per Melee:** Three, usually by biting and hitting with fists.

**Damage (S.D.C./Hit Points):**

Bite: 2D6 damage (and a chance of infection if the wound isn't treated shortly after receiving it). P.S. damage bonus does NOT apply to bite attacks.

Head Butt: 2D4 damage + P.S. damage bonus (if any).

Punch/Claw Attack: 1D6 damage + P.S. damage bonus (if any).

Power Punch: Not possible by Slouchers.

Kick Attack: 2D4 damage + P.S. damage bonus (if any).

Weapon: Rare, but sometimes a Sloucher may use a melee weapon or handheld object as a weapon to bludgeon/hit with.

Note: Leap Kick, other kicks, body flip, and martial arts attacks are NOT possible by Slouchers.

**Bonuses:** +2 to strike; also see Natural Abilities.

**Penalties:** -2 to initiative and -7 on Perception Rolls.

**Vulnerabilities:** Dumb, animalistic, easily tricked, slow moving, can't swim, poor climbers, head shots, decapitation and fire kill, severe cold reduces speed. Fear of fire holds them at bay; Horror Factor 16.

# Crawlers

"Beware, Crawlers squeeze into the smallest spaces. Places where full size zombies can't fit. Places you don't think about as dangerous. I hate them."

— Brad Ashley, *Leader of the Reapers*

Crawlers are any zombie that has lost its legs, or legs and lower torso, or one or both legs as well as its arms and upper body (pretty much a spine and a head). In short, any zombie that has lost body parts and must crawl or walk using its hands and arms, or slither on its belly like a snake, is a Crawler.

Even as dismembered, half-corpses, Crawlers are dangerous. They are sometimes called Sewer Zombies, because they scurry along on their bellies or walk on their hands close to the ground, hiding in sewer pipes, hugging the curb and crawling along narrow spaces such as alleys, gutters, drainage ditches and sewers. They hide under vehicles and stairs, beds and furniture, behinds trash bins, and crawl through basement windows and squeeze through small openings to get inside buildings and homes. Crawlers instinctively adjust to use their diminished stature to crawl and hide in large pipes, sewers, drain tunnels, crawl spaces, air ducts, large heating vents, and other narrow spaces. They grab at people's ankles and lunge from dark corners and narrow spaces where a full-sized zombie could never fit. They are also better climbers and may lurk in rafters, hay lofts, closet shelves and the tops of bookcases, run along banisters and pipes along ceilings (using their hands), and drop down on unsuspecting prey.

Like most zombies, Crawlers may initiate or respond to the moan and seek to consume life energy. Unlike most other zombies, they are more likely to kill mice, rats, bats and other small animals to feed on their P.P.E. even if the zombie can only consume one third of an animal's available P.P.E.

**Also known as:** Sewer Zombies, Slitherers, Runts and Half-Pints.

**Alignment:** Considered Diabolic.

**Attributes:** I.Q. 1D4, M.E. 1D6, M.A. 1D4, P.S. 2x Strength when alive (typically 2D6+18), P.P. 1D6+3, P.E. 1D6+10, P.B. 1D6, Spd 1D4+3.

**Hit Points:** P.E. attribute number, but all Main Body S.D.C. must be depleted first before Hit Points can be affected.

**Note:** See *S.D.C. by Location* and *Hit Points* for more details.

**S.D.C. by Location:**

- \* Hands (2) – 1D6+4 each
- \* Arms (2) – 1D8+6 each
- \* Feet – Not applicable
- \* Legs – Not applicable
- \* Lower Jaw – 1D6+3
- \*\* Neck – 1D6+10
- \*\* Head – 2D6+14
- \*\*\* Main Body – 1D6+30





**Armor Rating:** 14

**Horror Factor:** 13

**P.P.E.** 1D4

**Natural Abilities:** Standard as previously described.

See Life Energy (P.P.E.): 9,000 feet (2,743.2 m) at night or in darkness.

Sense Life Energy (P.P.E.): 25 feet (7.6 m) to sense 1-6 people, 50 feet (15.2 m) to sense a group of 7-24 people, and 100 feet (30.5 m) to sense a group of 25 or more people. Half that range to sense animals. One quarter that range, 6.2 feet (1.9 m), when a zombie is dormant.

Recognize Human Scents: 83%. This also tells the zombie that humans are nearby, or have been present recently.

Track Humans by Scent: 18% chance, +10% if the human is sweaty or hasn't bathed in three or more days, +10% to follow the scent of blood, +5% if there is more than one human present in the same area, +5% to smell perfume, cologne or aftershave. All bonuses are accumulative.

Smell Fear in Humans: Makes zombies more aggressive: +1 on initiative and +1 to strike or disarm. If the level of fear is fever pitched or five or more people are terrified, the zombie is also +1 attack per melee around.

Zombies Can See Without Eyes: The eyes glow with a red light inside empty eye sockets.

Keen Sense of Hearing: Can pinpoint location of a Zombie Moan after hearing it for only 30 seconds.

Impervious to Most Everything: Only decapitation, destroying a zombie's brain, and fire can kill a zombie. Does not need to breathe, and survives underwater and in a vacuum.

S.D.C. and Hit Point Regeneration: 1D6+3 S.D.C. and 2 Hit Points are automatically restored every hour. Extra P.P.E. may also restore S.D.C. and Hit Points at a rate of 1D6+2 S.D.C. and one Hit Point per extra P.P.E. point. See S.D.C. and Hit Points for details.

No Life Energy of Their Own: Zombies are cold, dark creatures without body heat or an aura. They cannot be seen by infrared and thermal imaging optic systems. Rather, zombies register the same as a piece of timber.

Go Dormant: A stasis sleep that keeps zombies from decaying. Walking dead hide when they go dormant and can be waiting anywhere.

People Slain by the Zombie Rise as One: Victims slain in a zombie attack, their P.P.E. absorbed, rise as the walking dead within 2D4+4 minutes after expiration.

**Skills of Note:** Acrobatics 40%, Climb 65%/55%, and Prowl 30%.

**Attacks per Melee:** Two, usually by biting, head butting and hitting with fists.

**Damage (S.D.C./Hit Points):**

Bite: 2D6 damage (and a chance of infection if the wound isn't treated shortly after receiving it). P.S. damage bonus does NOT apply to bite attacks.

Head Butt: 2D4 damage + P.S. damage bonus (if any).

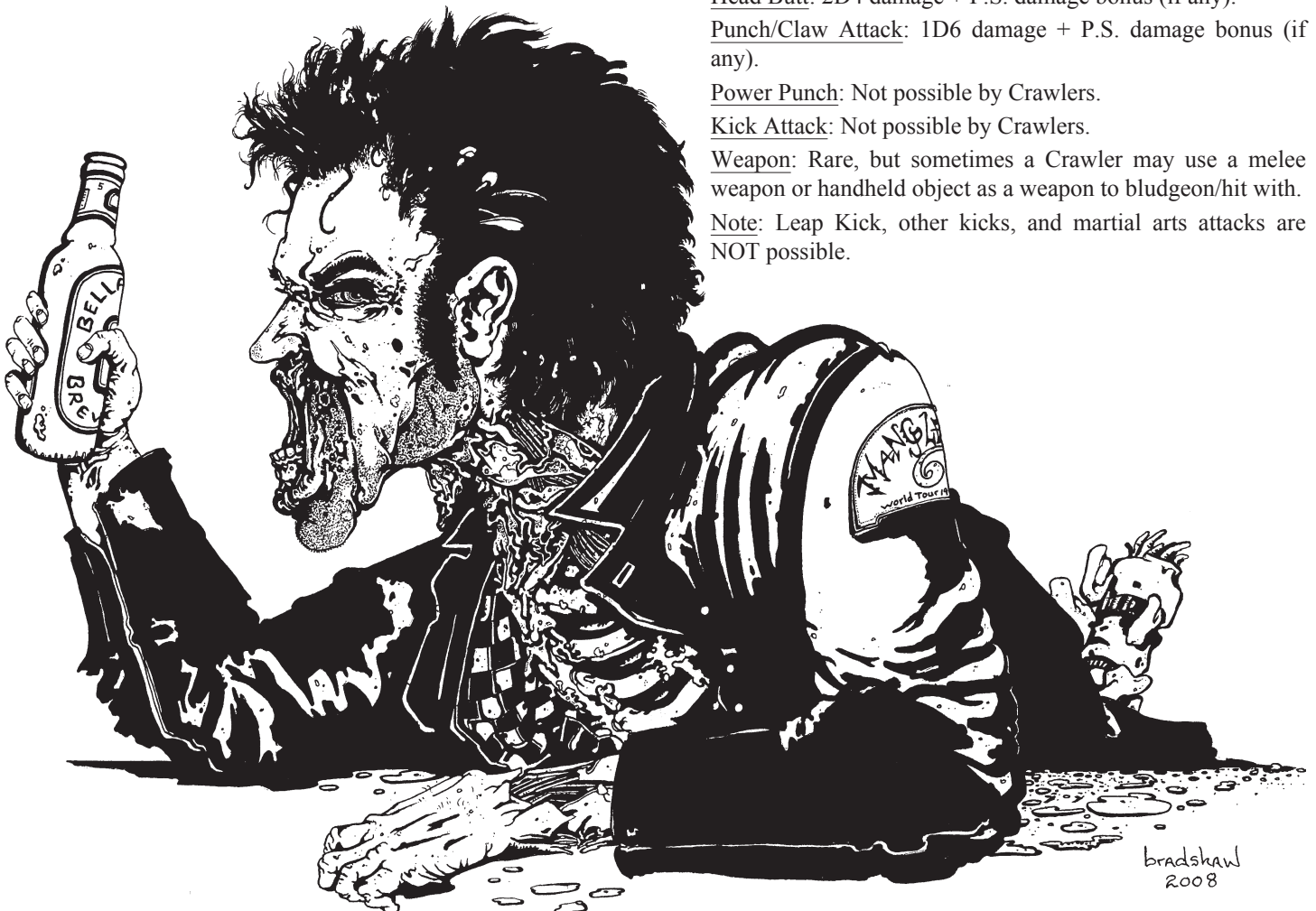
Punch/Claw Attack: 1D6 damage + P.S. damage bonus (if any).

Power Punch: Not possible by Crawlers.

Kick Attack: Not possible by Crawlers.

Weapon: Rare, but sometimes a Crawler may use a melee weapon or handheld object as a weapon to bludgeon/hit with.

Note: Leap Kick, other kicks, and martial arts attacks are NOT possible.



**Bonuses:** +1 to strike and +2 to entangle; also see Natural Abilities.

**Penalties:** -2 to initiative and -7 on Perception Rolls.

**Vulnerabilities:** Dumb, animalistic, easily tricked, slow moving, can't swim, fair climbers; head shots, decapitation and fire kill, severe cold reduces speed. Fear of fire holds them at bay; Horror Factor 16.

## Fast Attack Zombies

### A Zombie Aberration

“Not all zombies are created equal. There are weird variants – aberrations that break with convention. When you see one twitching, jerking its shoulders and shaking its head or looking around more than other walking dead, it's a safe bet you have a *Fast Attack Zombie* in your midst. If there are two or three of them together and acting the same way, you *know* that's exactly what they are: a variant zombie with the gift of agility and running speed.

“You might think of them as the wolf of the zombie world. They are fast. Real fast. Faster than most humans. They like to run you down, trip you up, and play with you like a cat with a mouse. They'll knock your feet out from under you, push you down and use similar tactics to keep you from escaping while the rest of the walking dead converge to kill you.

“Personally, I like to take Fast Attackers down first whenever I can, that way there aren't any surprises later when we make our retreat. And watch your brother's back. You don't want to let a Fast Attacker split you up, and take one of you down.”

– Brad Ashley, *Leader of the Reapers*

Fast Attack Zombies look just like any other walking dead, so it is impossible for most people to tell them apart until they start to run. The knowledgeable and observant survivor, however, may notice a few traits that can tip a person off to the presence of Fast Attackers. Where Slouchers and most other zombies are calm and ponderous, Fast Attackers are fidgety, and have a tendency to twitch, jerk and shake when standing still or moving slowly. They also appear to be more alert, and their eyes have a less dull, vacant look than those of Slouchers and Crawlers. They also scream rather than groan, but by the time a Fast Attacker is screaming, it's probably also in hot pursuit.

When a Fast Attack Zombie encounters a living human, it lets out a blood-curdling shriek, rather than the traditional moan. It then stands shuffling its feet or crouches down on all fours as if ready to lunge, its head and neck twitching and jerking as it eyeballs the prey. The shriek of the Fast Attacker has the same effect as the *Zombie Moan* and will attract other zombies within a 12 block radius, which is what a Fast Attack Zombie is waiting for. The weird Fast Attack Zombie will continue to shriek, but does not attack until the human prey makes his move. If the person attacks the zombie, it charges forward to meet the attack, trying to pounce and pin him. Failing that, the monster fights to kill its attacker, shrieking the entire time. If the human runs away, the Fast Attacker shrieks and runs after him. Fast Attack Zombies also respond to the *Zombie Moan* and are known to

rush out from a crowd of gathering Slouchers to take the lead in running down the fleeing humans.

Despite their superior speed, Fast Attack Zombies seldom make the actual kill. Unlike most other zombies, Fast Attack Zombies often wander and hunt in pairs and trios of fellow Runners, but whether there is one or three of them, Fast Attack Zombies seldom make the kill, they run down and corral human prey, or knock people off their feet, try to keep them off balance and from escaping, until the slower zombies converge to make the kill. The Fast Attack Zombie shares in the P.P.E. released when the human(s) is slain, but why it doesn't make a fast kill and devour all the P.P.E. for itself is another one of its inexplicable, strange quirks. Lucky for humans, Fast Attack Zombies are rare compared to Slouchers, accounting for only 5% of the zombie population.

**Also known as:** Fast Attacker, Fast Zombie, Runners, Screamers, Shriekers and Twitchers.

**Alignment:** Considered Diabolic.

**Attributes:** I.Q. 1D4+2, M.E. 1D6+1, M.A. 1D4, P.S. 2x Strength when alive (typically 1D6+18), P.P. 1D6+7, P.E. 1D6+15, P.B. 2D4, Spd 2D4+15.

**Hit Points:** P.E. attribute number, but all Main Body S.D.C. must be depleted first before Hit Points can be effected.

**Note:** See *S.D.C. by Location* and *Hit Points* for more details.

### S.D.C. by Location:

\* Hands (2) – 1D6+4 each

\* Arms (2) – 1D8+6 each

\* Feet (2) – 1D6+4 each

\* Legs (2) – 2D6+6 each

\* Lower Jaw – 1D6+3

\*\* Neck – 1D6+10

\*\* Head – 2D6+14

\*\*\* Main Body – 3D6+30

**Armor Rating:** 14

**Horror Factor:** 13

**P.P.E.** 1D4

**Natural Abilities:** Standard as previously described.

See Life Energy (P.P.E.): 9,000 feet (2,743.2 m) at night or in darkness.

Sense Life Energy (P.P.E.): 25 feet (7.6 m) to sense 1-6 people, 50 feet (15.2 m) to sense a group of 7-24 people, and 100 feet (30.5 m) to sense a group of 25 or more people. Half that range to sense animals. One quarter that range, 6.2 feet (1.9 m), when a zombie is dormant.

Recognize Human Scents: 83%. This also tells the zombie that humans are nearby, or have been present recently.

Track Humans by Scent: 18% chance, +10% if the human is sweaty or hasn't bathed in three or more days, +10% to follow the scent of blood, +5% if there is more than one human present in the same area, +5% to smell perfume, cologne or aftershave. All bonuses are accumulative.

Smell Fear in Humans: Makes zombies more aggressive: +1 on initiative and +1 to strike or disarm. If the level of fear is fever pitched or five or more people are terrified, the zombie is also +1 attack per melee around.



Zombies Can See Without Eyes: The eyes glow with a red light inside empty eye sockets.

Keen Sense of Hearing: Can pinpoint location of a Zombie Moan after hearing it for only 30 seconds.

Impervious to Most Everything: Only decapitation, destroying a zombie's brain, and fire can kill a zombie. Does not need to breathe, and survives underwater and in a vacuum.

S.D.C. and Hit Point Regeneration: 1D6+3 S.D.C. and 2 Hit Points are automatically restored every hour. Extra P.P.E. may also restore S.D.C. and Hit Points at a rate of 1D6+2 S.D.C. and one Hit Point per extra P.P.E. point. See S.D.C. and Hit Points for details.

No Life Energy of Their Own: Zombies are cold, dark creatures without body heat or an aura. They cannot be seen by infrared and thermal imaging optic systems. Rather, zombies register the same as a piece of timber.

Go Dormant: A stasis sleep that keeps zombies from decaying. Walking dead hide when they go dormant and can be waiting anywhere.

People Slain by the Zombie Rise as One: Victims slain in a zombie attack, their P.P.E. absorbed, rise as the walking dead within 2D4+4 minutes after expiration.

**Skills of Note:** Climb 55%/45% and Escape Artist 30%.

**Attacks per Melee:** Four, usually by pushing, tripping, knockdown, kicking and hitting with fists. Fast Attack Zombies tend to trip and delay prey long enough for Slouchers to arrive and kill the prey, rather than rush in for the kill themselves.

**Damage (S.D.C./Hit Points):**

Bite: 2D6 damage (and a chance of infection if the wound isn't treated shortly after receiving it). P.S. damage bonus does NOT apply to bite attacks.

Head Butt: 2D4 damage + P.S. damage bonus (if any).

Punch/Claw Attack: 1D6 damage + P.S. damage bonus (if any).

Power Punch: Not possible by Fast Attack Zombies.

Pounce Attack: 1D4 damage (P.S. does not apply) plus a 01-50% chance of knockdown (victim of knockdown loses initiative and one melee attack) by leaping on top of the character, and a 01-40% chance of pinning the person they pounced on, but only if the knockdown portion of the pounce was successful. If the victim has been knocked down flat on his back and pinned, the zombie can hold him in place until other zombies arrive to converge and kill, or attack using a Head Butt attack or biting. The victim can try to roll away or push the zombie off of him, but each attempt counts as 2 melee attacks, and the human must roll an 18, 19 or 20 to escape; considered a parrying combat move and parry bonuses apply. Of course, another character(s) can attack the pinning zombie to knock him off the trapped individual.

Kick Attack: 2D6 damage + P.S. damage bonus (if any).

Leap Kick (Power Kick): 3D8 damage + P.S. damage bonus (if any), but counts as two melee attacks.

Knockdown Attack/Push/Trip: A shoving attack that does 1D6 damage plus has a 01-70% likelihood of knocking an

opponent off his feet. Victims of knockdown lose initiative and one melee attack.

**Weapon:** Rare, but sometimes the zombie uses a melee weapon or handheld object as a weapon to bludgeon/hit with.

**Bonuses:** +2 to strike, +2 to dodge and +1 to entangle; also see Damage and Natural Abilities.

**Penalties:** -1 on initiative and -5 on Perception Rolls.

**Vulnerabilities:** Dumb, animalistic, easily tricked, can't swim, and poor climbers. Head shots, decapitation and fire kill, severe cold reduces speed. Fear of fire holds them at bay; Horror Factor 16.

## Flesh-Eating Zombies

### A Zombie Aberration

"I know, I said zombies survive on life energy, and that's true enough, but there are variant types of walking dead, remember? One of these aberrations is what we call a Flesh-Eating Zombie. A feral monster that hunts in pairs and small packs of other Flesh Eaters. They'll stalk you like a pride of lions and rip you to shreds before you know what hit you. I've seen them tear off a man's arm and run into the shadows, and I've seen four of them eat a man alive, so trust me when I tell you they are savage beasts to be avoided or put down."

— Brad Ashley, *Leader of the Reapers*

Flesh-Eating Zombies behave more like animal predators or savage barbarians than the classic Sloucher. They are dim-witted monsters driven by hunger and instinct, and possess most of the usual zombie traits and abilities. They also need P.P.E. to survive, but like a man-eating lion that has developed a taste for human meat and blood, Flesh Eaters love the taste of human flesh.

Humans are the prey of choice for Flesh-Eating Zombies, but they also feed on rats, dogs, cats and other small animals, as well as carrion – the dead bodies of humans and animals. Easy human prey such as children, the sick, injured and elderly are the prime targets of these cowardly walking dead, as they tend to avoid groups of four or more people unless they can pick off a weak one or a straggler.

Flesh-Eating Zombies are faster than Slouchers but slower than Fast Attack Zombies. Whereas Fast Attack Zombies are more like dogs, Flesh-Eating Zombies are more like a feline predator. Like a cat, Flesh Eaters may watch and follow their human prey, wait for an opportunity to pick off one or two members of a larger group, and instinctively target those who are alone, small, weak or injured. Rather than mindlessly attack anyone they see, these cunning zombie predators watch and strike when the time is right, or lay in wait to ambush the living.

Flesh-Eating Zombies are known to climb up debris, stairs, rafters, and watch from rooftops and other high positions where they have a better view of the surrounding landscape. This is a prime example of their predatory nature and different way of thinking, as this would never cross the mind of a Sloucher or most other zombies. The man-eating walking dead are also known to drop down on victims from heights and leap or charge out from a hiding place to catch their intended prey off guard.

Flesh Eaters hunt alone or only with other Flesh-Eating Zombies. This means the life energy/P.P.E. (and meat) from a kill is only shared among the members of their own small group.

Flesh-Eating Zombies may hunt as a solitary individual, in pairs or in small groups of 3-6 (1D4+2). While pairs and small groups may work together and share the kill with the other members of their band, they do NOT use the moan nor converging tactics. Instead, they bark and howl to call the members of their own group, and communicate through grunts, growls and hisses like wild animals. In combat, they use tag-team tactics with one or two doing the fighting, ideally against a solitary opponent. The others watch and wait in the wings until it is their turn to join the battle. That happens when one of the attacking Flesh Eating Zombies has used up its attacks and takes a step back or is seriously hurt, then one of the others jumps in to continue the fight. However, Flesh Eaters seldom take on an equal number of opponents – they like to outnumber their victims by 2 to 1 – and retreat back into the shadows if an opponent proves to be too difficult or more humans arrive to help their comrade.

They kill by using their teeth to bite, tearing fingers/claws, and hammering fists. They seldom use any weapon, even if it is laying out in the open. Eating starts immediately, sometimes even while their prey is still alive. Soft organs like entrails, kidneys, and other internal organs are the first to be eaten. The monsters are also known to tear or chew off a limb or two and run off with it to eat like a chicken leg in the security of their lair or a dark corner. Perhaps instinctively, Flesh Eaters leave the head and brain of their victims alone. Which mean 6-12 minutes after their kill, their chewed up human victims rises as one of the walking dead. As soon as the corpse rises as a zombie (typically a Sloucher or Crawler if limbs have been removed), Flesh Eaters stop gnawing on the corpse and leave the newly



risen zombie alone. Zombies with their guts torn out or which look as if they have been partially eaten, are likely to be the victims of Flesh-Eating zombies.

**Also known as:** Flesh Eaters, Man Eaters, Feral Zombies and Hunter Zombies.

**Alignment:** Considered Diabolic.

**Attributes:** I.Q. 1D4+2 (low predatory animal equivalent), M.E. 1D6+1, M.A. 1D4, P.S. 2x Strength when alive (typically 3D6+14), P.P. 1D6+4, P.E. 1D6+15, P.B. 2D4, Spd 1D4+9.

**Attacks per Melee Round:** Three.

**Hit Points:** P.E. attribute number +3, but all Main Body S.D.C. must be depleted first before Hit Points can be affected.

**Note:** See *S.D.C. by Location* and *Hit Points* for more details.

**S.D.C. by Location:**

- \* Hands (2) – 1D6+4 each
- \* Arms (2) – 1D8+6 each
- \* Feet (2) – 1D6+4 each
- \* Legs (2) – 2D6+6 each
- \* Lower Jaw – 1D6+3
- \*\* Neck – 1D6+10
- \*\* Head – 2D6+14
- \*\*\* Main Body – 3D6+30

**Armor Rating:** 12

**Horror Factor:** 13

**P.P.E.** 1D4

**Natural Abilities:** Standard as previously described.

See Life Energy (P.P.E.): 9,000 feet (2,743.2 m) at night or in darkness.

Sense Life Energy (P.P.E.): 25 feet (7.6 m) to sense 1-6 people, 50 feet (15.2 m) to sense a group of 7-24 people, and 100 feet (30.5 m) to sense a group of 25 or more people. Half that range to sense animals. One quarter that range, 6.2 feet (1.9 m), when a zombie is dormant.

Recognize Human Scents (Enhanced): 90%. This also tells the zombie that humans are nearby, or have been present recently.

Track Humans by Scent (Enhanced): 28% chance, +10% if the human is sweaty or hasn't bathed in three or more days, +20% to follow the scent of blood, +5% if there is more than one human present in the same area, +5% to smell perfume, cologne or aftershave. All bonuses are accumulative.

Smell Fear in Humans (Enhanced): Makes zombies more aggressive: +2 on initiative and +2 to strike or disarm. If the level of fear is fever pitched or five or more people are terrified, the zombie is also +1 attack per melee around.

Zombies Can See Without Eyes: The eyes glow with a red light inside empty eye sockets.

Keen Sense of Hearing: Can pinpoint location of a Zombie Moan after hearing it for only 30 seconds.

Impervious to Most Everything: Only decapitation, destroying a zombie's brain, and fire can kill a zombie. Does not need to breathe, and survives underwater and in a vacuum.

S.D.C. and Hit Point Regeneration: 1D6+3 S.D.C. and 2 Hit Points are automatically restored every hour. Extra P.P.E. may also restore S.D.C. and Hit Points at a rate of 1D6+2 S.D.C. and one Hit Point per extra P.P.E. point. See S.D.C. and Hit Points for details.

No Life Energy of Their Own: Zombies are cold, dark creatures without body heat or an aura. They cannot be seen by infrared and thermal imaging optic systems. Rather, zombies register the same as a piece of timber.

Go Dormant: A stasis sleep that keeps zombies from decaying. Walking dead hide when they go dormant and can be waiting anywhere.

People Slain by the Zombie Rise as One: Victims slain in a zombie attack, their P.P.E. absorbed, rise as the walking dead within 2D4+4 minutes after expiration.

**Skills of Note:** Climb 65%/40%, Prowl 45%, Tail 55%, and Track (Humans) 36%.

**Attacks per Melee:** Three, usually by biting and hitting with fists.

**Damage (S.D.C./Hit Points):**

Bite: 2D6 damage (and a chance of infection if the wound isn't treated shortly after receiving it). P.S. damage bonus does NOT apply to bite attacks.

Head Butt: 2D4 damage + P.S. damage bonus (if any).

Punch/Claw Attack: 1D6 damage + P.S. damage bonus (if any).

Power Punch: Not possible.

Kick Attack: 2D4 damage + P.S. damage bonus (if any).

Weapon: A rarity; almost never.

Note: Leap Kick, other kicks, body flip, and martial arts attacks are NOT possible by Flesh Eaters.

**Bonuses:** +3 to strike, +1 to disarm, also see Natural Abilities.

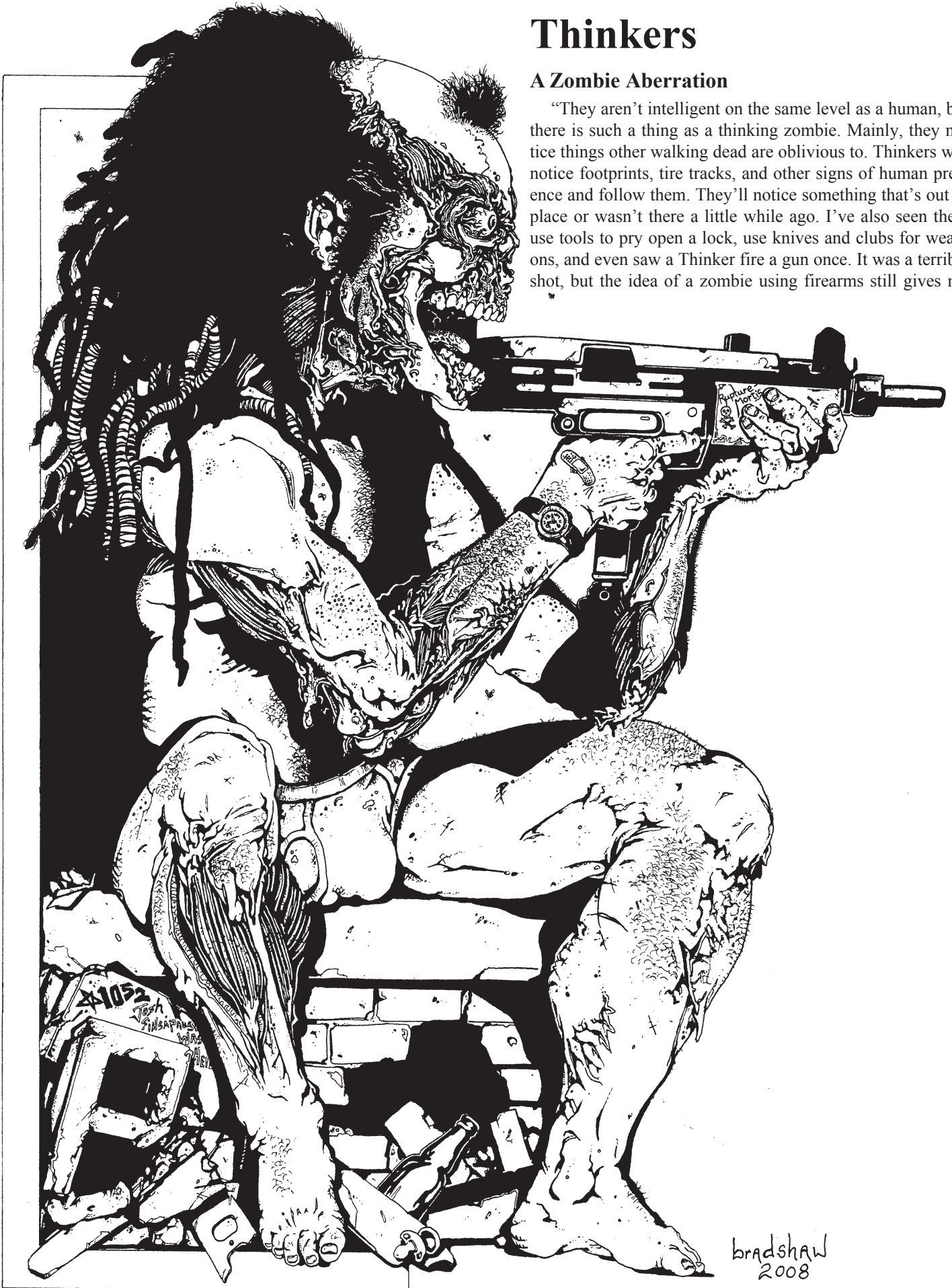
**Penalties:** -3 on Perception Rolls.

**Vulnerabilities:** A slightly lower A.R. (12) makes them a little more vulnerable. They hunt in small groups of 2-6, making them more manageable in combat. Animalistic behavior, attracted to the carcass of dead animals and the corpses of people and can be lured out in the open with dead meat or "live bait." Still fairly slow moving compared to most humans, cannot swim, and affected by cold. Head shots, decapitation and fire kill. Severe cold reduces speed. Fear of fire holds them at bay; Horror Factor 16.

# Thinkers

## A Zombie Aberration

“They aren’t intelligent on the same level as a human, but there is such a thing as a thinking zombie. Mainly, they notice things other walking dead are oblivious to. Thinkers will notice footprints, tire tracks, and other signs of human presence and follow them. They’ll notice something that’s out of place or wasn’t there a little while ago. I’ve also seen them use tools to pry open a lock, use knives and clubs for weapons, and even saw a Thinker fire a gun once. It was a terrible shot, but the idea of a zombie using firearms still gives me





the shivers. Thank God they aren't smart enough to drive a car, make ammo, or organize the other zombies in a big way. They are still driven by instinct, hunger and a need to kill us.

"I'd guess Thinkers are chimpanzee smart, maybe a little smarter. But here's the kicker: Thinkers can get other zombies to follow them. Not like generals or civic leaders, but they can gather a dozen or two dozen Slouchers and Crawlers and point them in a particular direction, or to block an exit, or get them to wait in ambush. Encounter a Thinker, destroy it. You don't need a damn Smart Zombie on your back, serving the needs of Death Cult Priests or leading other walking dead against you."

– Brad Ashley, *Leader of the Reapers*

In most ways, Thinkers look and behave like any Sloucher, they are an animated corpse that moves slowly, can't speak, moans, converges and must feed on the living. Like any other zombie, they wander around in search of prey and go dormant when prey is not readily available. What makes Thinkers unique is they retain some measure of *intelligence* and *self-awareness*. Whereas most zombies are oblivious to the world around them, and could wander around in circles, passing the same buildings a hundred times and never know it, Thinkers notice their surroundings, patterns and changes.

Thinkers, like most zombies, live to hunt and feed upon humans, they are just smarter about how they do it, which is bad news for human beings. Worse is the fact that Thinkers can get the less intelligent zombies to follow them, especially if feeding is involved.

It's funny how even a little self-awareness and smarts makes such a big difference. Being more aware of itself, others and its surroundings, enables Thinkers to better hunt humans, formulate simple plans of attack, and react to situations that might help it capture prey, escape danger and survive (i.e. is smart enough to retreat when the odds are against it, etc.), as well as set ambushes and lead other zombies against human prey. By recognizing patterns and changes in the environment it inhabits, a Thinker may recognize that humans keep coming to a particular building and, next time, be waiting for them with a couple dozen walking dead in tow. Or a Thinker might notice a path traveled by humans, or an ambush or trap for zombies set by humans, or a resource/item/person humans might want and use it as a lure for an ambush of its own, and so on. All of this makes the Thinker a much more dangerous adversary.

See *Special Abilities*, below, for more details on the Thinker's cognitive abilities.

### **Thinker Zombie R.C.C.**

**Note:** Not available nor appropriate as a Player Character.

**Also known as:** Thinking Zombie, Smart Zombie, Brain, and Leader.

**Alignment:** Considered Diabolic.

**Attributes:** I.Q. 1D4+8, M.E. 1D4+8, M.A. 1D4+6, P.S. 2x Strength when alive (typically 2D6+14), P.P. 1D6+3, P.E. 1D6+15, P.B. 2D4, Spd 1D4+8.

**Hit Points:** P.E. attribute number +6, but all Main Body S.D.C. must be depleted first before Hit Points can be affected.

**Note:** See *S.D.C. by Location* and *Hit Points* for more details.

### **S.D.C. by Location:**

\* Hands (2) – 1D6+6 each

\* Arms (2) – 1D8+8 each

\* Feet (2) – 1D6+6 each

\* Legs (2) – 2D6+10 each

\* Lower Jaw – 1D6+6

\*\* Neck – 1D6+12

\*\* Head – 2D6+16

\*\*\* Main Body – 3D6+30

**Armor Rating:** 14

**Horror Factor:** 13

**P.P.E.** 1D4+2

### **Special Abilities of the Thinker:**

Simple Awareness and Reasoning: The Thinker's great advantage is that it is more aware of itself, the people and the things going on around it, than any other zombie with the exception of the *Mock Zombie*.

This means a Thinker may notice footprints or a worn footpath indicating recent or frequent travel. It may notice that humans seem to be seen at a particular area on a regular basis, and that they must come and go by a particular avenue of travel. It may recognize a weapon cache, duffle bag, or a motorcycle that wasn't there before. Moreover, Thinkers are able to take these observations and glean information from them and formulate simple strategies, tactics and plans. Thus, a Thinker may hide and observe, set an ambush, and even direct other zombies to block a path or door, lay in wait at a particular area, and so on. Likewise, while a Thinker is unable to use vehicles and many other machines and devices, the monster is likely to recognize their purpose and value to humans.

For example, a Thinker who notices three motorcycles that weren't there a little while ago, knows humans ride them for transportation. This also means the Thinker knows, a) there must be humans in the area, and b) they are likely to come back for these vehicles, and the Thinker may use that knowledge to set an ambush to jump them when they come back for them, or place 15 zombies to guard the bikes and prevent the humans from using them to get away, or have zombies take the bikes away or damage them, etc. A Thinker might also know that if the vehicle is warm to the touch, that it was recently used and that humans have only just arrived and must be nearby. Similarly, Thinkers are likely to recognize the value of resources valued by humans like guns, food, medicine, and the places that contain them (stores, clinics, etc.). That means it keeps an eye out for humans at such locations and may even send plenty of zombies in and around such places to hunt. Thinkers can't read but they may come to recognize a logo and that this *image* seems to attract humans to it.

Use Simple Weapons and Tools. A Thinker can figure out, through observation and trial and error, how to use simple weapons and tools such as a hammer, screwdriver, crowbar, scissors, knife, sword, mace, etc., including simple power

tools like a drill or chainsaw, and even guns. This zombie can also flip switches to turn on a light, radio, and other simple devices, use rope, duct tape, ladders, locks, a backpack, and so on, and may keep and reuse weapons and tools it finds handy. HOWEVER, while the Thinker can use basic handheld weapons, tools and devices, it is *not* smart enough to figure out how to reload them, recharge/refuel them, or use more complex items. A zombie Thinker cannot speak, read, use a computer, pilot a vehicle or even peddle a bicycle, operate heavy machinery or be artistic or creative.

Simple Communication with Zombies: Thinkers can't speak human words, although they recognize and understand what people are saying on at least a basic level (most other zombies don't have a clue, nor do they care). Thinkers can also communicate with Slouchers, Crawlers and other zombies via body language, pointing and gesturing, the moan, and with a range of grunts, growls, and guttural sounds. The smart zombie uses its ability to communicate to get other walking dead to follow simple instructions like come with him, stop, stay, attack, block this entrance, move this debris, hide here, and similar. Thinkers understand how other zombies think and mainly put them in positions and places where they may be able to find, catch and converge on human prey. However, Thinkers can understand Death Cult Priests better than other walking dead, and follow more complex orders and function as squad leaders of dumber zombies to keep them on track and carrying out the Priest's orders. **Note:** Thinkers do not have emotions or desires other than to feed upon the living, nor do they value possessions. The items a Thinker may keep are weapons and tools it has found to be useful.

**Natural Abilities:** Standard as previously described.

See Life Energy (P.P.E.): 9,000 feet (2,743.2 m) at night or in darkness.

Sense Life Energy (P.P.E.): 25 feet (7.6 m) to sense 1-6 people, 50 feet (15.2 m) to sense a group of 7-24 people, and 100 feet (30.5 m) to sense a group of 25 or more people. Half that range to sense animals. One quarter that range, 6.2 feet (1.9 m), when a zombie is dormant.

Recognize Human Scents: 83%. This also tells the zombie that humans are nearby, or have been present recently.

Track Humans by Scent: 18% chance, +10% if the human is sweaty or hasn't bathed in three or more days, +10% to follow the scent of blood, +5% if there is more than one human present in the same area, +5% to smell perfume, cologne or aftershave. All bonuses are accumulative.

Smell Fear in Humans: Makes zombies more aggressive: +1 on initiative and +1 to strike or disarm. If the level of fear is fever pitched or five or more people are terrified, the zombie is also +1 attack per melee around.

Zombies Can See Without Eyes: The eyes glow with a red light inside empty eye sockets.

Keen Sense of Hearing: Can pinpoint location of a Zombie Moan after hearing it for only 30 seconds.

Impervious to Most Everything: Only decapitation, destroying a zombie's brain, and fire can kill a zombie. Does not need to breathe, and survives underwater and in a vacuum.

S.D.C. and Hit Point Regeneration: 1D6+3 S.D.C. and 2 Hit Points are automatically restored every hour. Extra P.P.E. may also restore S.D.C. and Hit Points at a rate of 1D6+2 S.D.C. and one Hit Point per extra P.P.E. point. See S.D.C. and Hit Points for details.

No Life Energy of Their Own: Zombies are cold, dark creatures without body heat or an aura. They cannot be seen by infrared and thermal imaging optic systems. Rather, zombies register the same as a piece of timber.

Go Dormant: A stasis sleep that keeps zombies from decaying. Walking dead hide when they go dormant and can be waiting anywhere.

People Slain by the Zombie Rise as One: Victims slain in a zombie attack, their P.P.E. absorbed, rise as the walking dead within 2D4+4 minutes after expiration.

**Skills of Note:** Climb 45%/30%, Detect Ambush 45%, Detect Concealment 35%, Land Navigation 58%, Language: Native Tongue (understand only) 50%, Prowl 40%, Tailing 50%, and Tracking (People) 50%.

**Attacks per Melee:** Three and may use simple weapons.

**Damage (S.D.C./Hit Points):**

Bite: 2D6 damage (and a chance of infection if the wound isn't treated shortly after receiving it). P.S. damage bonus does NOT apply to bite attacks.

Head Butt: 2D4 damage + P.S. damage bonus (if any).

Punch/Claw Attack: 1D6 damage + P.S. damage bonus (if any).

Power Punch: 2D6 damage + P.S. damage bonus, but counts as two melee attacks.

Kick Attack: 2D4 damage + P.S. damage bonus (if any).

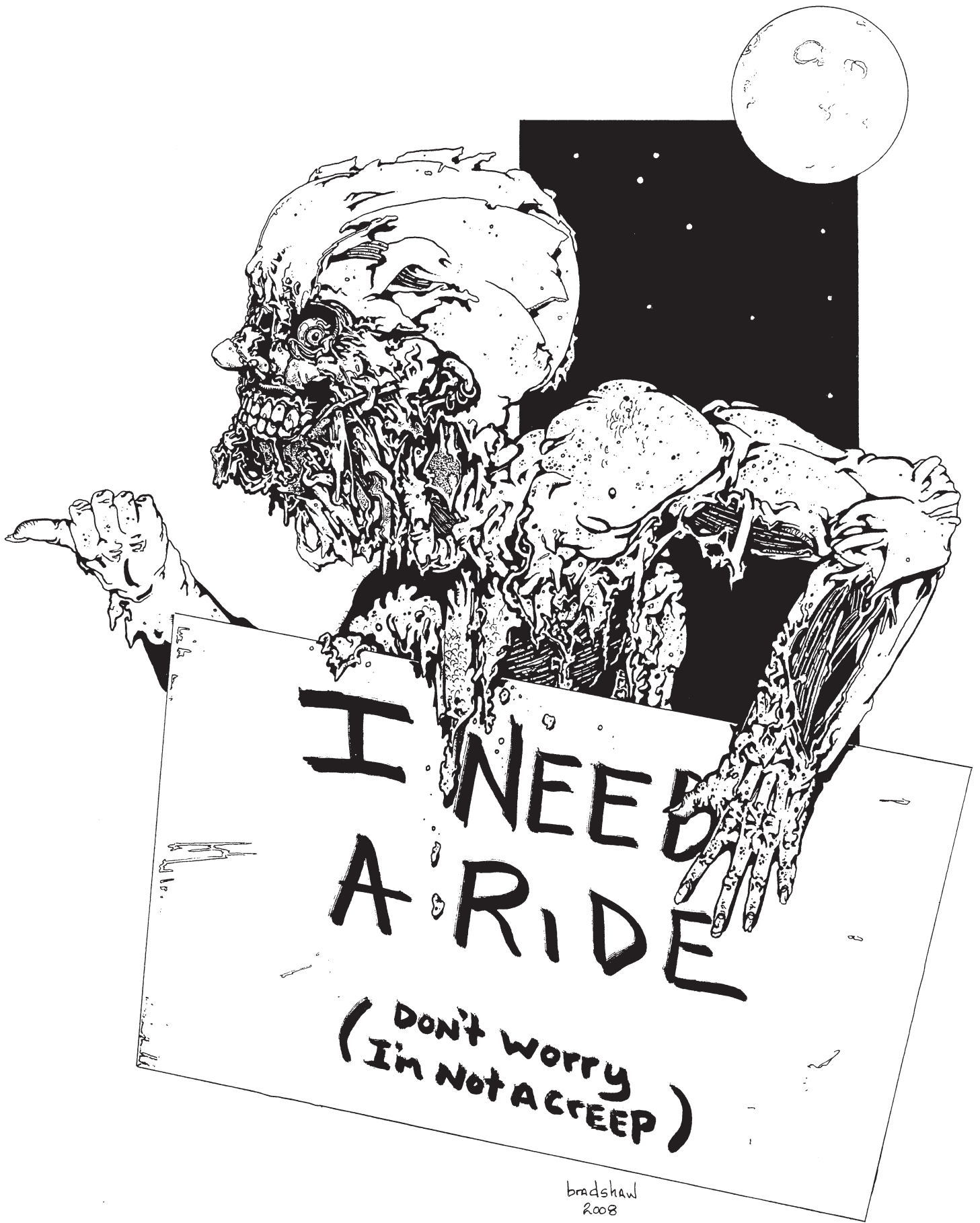
Weapon: May use simple weapons and tools. See Special Abilities.

Note: Leap Kick, other kicks, body flip, and martial arts attacks are NOT possible by Thinkers.

**Bonuses:** +1 on initiative, +2 on Perception Rolls, +1 to strike, parry and dodge, +1 to disarm and pull punch, and +2 to roll with impact; also see *Special Abilities* and *Natural Abilities*.

**Penalties:** Thinkers fire guns and other long-range weapons with a penalty of -2 to strike and the zombie does not know nor is it able to figure out how to reload a gun, or recharge/refuel tools and devices, and may even try to use them a few times before realizing they are out of fuel/ammunition and abandoning them.

**Vulnerabilities:** The usual: Slow moving, can't swim and poor climber. Head shots, decapitation and fire kill it, severe cold reduces speed. Fear of fire is as strong in a Thinker as any zombie and holds it at bay; Horror Factor 16. Plus: Thinkers have only the most rudimentary powers of reason and the ability to recognize patterns, figure out puzzle and formulate simple ideas; cannot read or talk. Some exhibit a sardonic sense of humor or irony.



bradshaw  
2008

# Mock Zombies

## A Zombie Aberration

“One of these days you are going to come across someone who you think is a zombie until it says hello. Your jaw is going to drop when the damn thing opens its mouth and starts to talk. It will probably be friendly and tell you how glad it is to see you, ‘a fellow human.’ It will insist it is not one of the walking dead. After all, it couldn’t be having this conversation if it was, now could it? It might go on to explain how it is a human, like you, only with some terrible disease, or disfigurement from an accident or a zombie attack. It might even claim this is what the disease of the Wave did to people who survived it and didn’t turn into a zombie.

“Don’t believe it for a second.

“You may feel confused and conflicted. You might ask yourself, ‘What if this person is telling the truth?’

“Stop right there. First, it’s *not* a person. It’s a zombie. What we call a *Mock Zombie*. One of the walking dead that has some of its memories, identity and intelligence. All are crazy as a bed-bug, convinced they aren’t zombies, but sooner or later, when the hunger pangs get too strong to contain, it’s lunchtime, and *you* are on the menu – you, or one of your teammates or an innocent survivor. Don’t listen to this zombie’s lies, and don’t trust it can help you no matter what the damn thing says. Kill it. End of story. Kill it before it turns on you.”

– Brad Ashley, *Leader of the Reapers*

Mock Zombies are the among the rarest and strangest of all the Zombie Aberrations (1%). They are indeed walking dead, and often seem to be more rotted and hideous looking than most. They see life energy, hunger for it, and understand the call of the Zombie Moan and how zombies function. A Mock Zombie is accepted by other zombies and may participate in convergence and share in the P.P.E. divided among its brethren. What makes the Mock Zombie so unique is that, **a**) it can speak, **b**) it clings to its human identity and some of its old memories, **c**) it retains some of the skills it knew as a human, and most importantly, **d**) it does NOT believe it is a zombie!

This weird walking dead is in complete denial that it has died and come back as a zombie. Even as hunks of rotting flesh drop off its body the Mock Zombie will tell anyone willing to listen how it is not – ABSOLUTELY NOT – a zombie. The Mock Zombie has a convincing explanation for everything, some plausible sounding, others preposterous, but the thing insists it is human, not a walking dead. (“Zombie?!? Are you insane? Zombies can’t talk. Zombies don’t have memories and human skills. No, I’m suffering from a terrible disease [something real like leprosy or the Wave, or something made up].” “Didn’t I just save your life?” And so on.)

To prove the point, a Mock Zombie is often willing to go to extreme lengths, and is always ready to *help* real humans in any way it can. This might include warning human survivors about Death Cults, Retro-Savages, areas where zombies are plentiful or hunting, and other dangers, as well as escorting people to places where they can get necessary supplies (medicine, fuel, gear, food, guns, ammo, etc.), and even try to help them escape

the clutches of other walking dead! To keep the illusion of humanity, many Mock Zombies wear clean clothing, jewelry, sunglasses and hats, eat human food, drink human beverages, pretend to enjoy booze, sweets or cigarettes, talk lovingly about lost family members (even if it is the one who killed them!), the good ol’ days before the Wave, and about how “together we” (it and its new human acquaintances) can take back “our world.” Likewise, Mock Zombies talk negatively about the walking dead, the Wave, Death Cults, Retro-Savages, and the terrible trouble “us survivors of the Zombie Apocalypse must continue to endure.” Many are extremely convincing.

Perhaps the strangest aspect about the Mock Zombie is that the creature really, really wants to believe the lies it tells. Indeed, the majority believe their own lies and have convinced themselves they are not zombies. The poor tortured thing can’t stand the idea it could be some kind of undead abomination and just does not accept it.

The trouble is, that terrible hunger and that constant nagging urge to kill people just won’t go away. Yes, a Mock Zombie may be able to suppress the need to feed on the life energy of humans, but sooner or later, it must and it will. The urge becomes most difficult to manage when the creature is left alone with a single individual. After awhile, having a delicious human in such close proximity, especially if left alone for more than an hour, the Mock Zombie starts thinking like a starving cartoon character: It stops seeing the human in its company as its buddy, companion or “fellow human being,” and sees him as a yummy, human-sized hot dog or turkey dinner just begging to be eaten. Or in this case, slain and his life energy devoured. The Mock Zombie just can’t help itself. It can say it isn’t so all it wants, but it doesn’t change the fact that it *is* a zombie, and zombies must kill to feed.

Allowing a Mock Zombie into a group of human survivors (or player group) is asking for trouble. The zombie will target prey and victimize them in a way similar to a *serial killer*, then wait for an opportunity to take their life. Most Mock Zombies strike when their victim is alone, away from the group, hurt, distracted and when the zombie can pin the death or disappearance on someone else. Despite its intense denial about being a walking dead, the Mock Zombie spins believable lies and explanations to cover its trail and to conceal its true monstrous nature, including what must have happened to someone who has disappeared. Like most predators, the Mock is attracted to prey unable to protect themselves, such as children, the elderly, the sick, injured and trusting. Bring one back to a survivors’ safe haven community is like putting a fox in the hen house. The Mock Zombie feels bad about killing people, but it won’t stop the creature from doing it. In fact, many are able to convince themselves to believe their own lies and cover stories. (“I’m not capable of such brutality, it must have been a Sloucher or Flesh Eater that killed Mike. Not me!”)

**The Pretender.** Mock Zombies may be crazy, but they are smart, cunning and retain enough human behavior to be duplicitous and treacherous. The most dangerous are the Mock Zombies in *sheep’s clothing*. Those who conceal the fact that they might be zombies, make certain they consume enough life energy to stave off deterioration, and *look completely human*. This zombie is smart enough to avoid physical examinations (he is dead) as well as avoid being seen on a thermal imaging device



(feeling cold to the touch isn't an automatic red flag to most people, especially if the person seems to be nice, helpful or a good guy). The Pretender also wears clothing, possibly including gloves and caps/hats, to **a**) look all the more human, **b**) cover his cold body (he or she won't feel cold to the touch through clothing) and **c**) to fit in. Likewise, *makeup* may be used to further conceal dark circles under the eyes, a sickly appearance, or pale skin on the face, neck and hands.

Pretenders are the most dangerous because they are very much like serial killers hiding in plain sight and the fact they work hard to appear normal and unnoticed. Also like a serial murderer, they hunt and kill on a regular basis. The Pretender, after all, must conceal its "illness" by feeding on P.P.E. every 3-7 days. Consuming life energy on a regular basis keeps it looking alive and human. Furthermore, because the Pretender doesn't share P.P.E. with other zombies, it always has plenty extra for its own needs and to keep up the human disguise. An animal may be killed for food in a pinch, but most Mock Zombies stalk human victims. Outsiders passing through or in search of shelter, food or help are perfect targets for this killer. As a result, a Pretender often puts itself in a position to search for, care for, and help other "people." Other Pretenders may stake out taverns and trading posts, while still others remain in the cities and towns where they pretend to be fellow survivors in need of help or able to provide help to human visitors – at least until it can get a person alone and kill him. These fiends use seduction, lies, trickery and greed, as well as the promise of safety, help and being reunited with a loved one to lure its victims to their doom. Ironically, despite this Mock Zombie's deliberate and calculated stalking of humans, the Pretender still insists it is *not* one of the walking dead. At worst, it might admit to being overzealous, overly sensitive, or confused as reasons for killing. Some might even admit to being a bad person, a murderer or serial killer, especially if it was a criminal or evil before the Zombie Apocalypse. But a zombie? Ridiculous. It just can't be true.

**Also known as:** Crazy Zombie, Pretender, and Creep.

**Alignment:** Considered Diabolic.

**Attributes:** I.Q. 2D4+7, M.E. 1D6+4, M.A. 2D4+20, P.S. 2x Strength when alive (typically 2D6+18), P.P. 1D6+1, P.E. 1D6+15, P.B. 2D4+3, Spd 1D6+6. **Note:** If the zombie feeds on P.P.E. regularly to keep its human appearance, increase P.B. an additional 1D4+4 points.

**Hit Points:** P.E. attribute number +8, but all Main Body S.D.C. must be depleted first before Hit Points can be affected. **Note:** See *S.D.C. by Location* and *Hit Points* for more details.

**S.D.C. by Location:**

- \* Hands (2) – 1D6+6 each
- \* Arms (2) – 1D8+8 each
- \* Feet (2) – 1D6+6 each
- \* Legs (2) – 2D6+10 each
- \* Lower Jaw – 1D6+6
- \*\* Neck – 1D6+10
- \*\* Head – 2D6+14
- \*\*\* Main Body – 3D6+30

**Armor Rating:** 14

**Horror Factor:** 13

**P.P.E.** 1D6+2

**Natural Abilities:** Standard as previously described.

See Life Energy (P.P.E.): 9,000 feet (2,743.2 m) at night or in darkness.

Sense Life Energy (P.P.E.): 25 feet (7.6 m) to sense 1-6 people, 50 feet (15.2 m) to sense a group of 7-24 people, and 100 feet (30.5 m) to sense a group of 25 or more people. Half that range to sense animals. One quarter that range, 6.2 feet (1.9 m) when a zombie is dormant.

Recognize Human Scents: 83%. This also tells the zombie that humans are nearby, or have been present recently.

Track Humans by Scent: 18% chance, +10% if the human is sweaty or hasn't bathed in three or more days, +10% to follow the scent of blood, +5% if there is more than one human present in the same area, +5% to smell perfume, cologne or aftershave. All bonuses are accumulative.

Smell Fear in Humans: Makes zombies more aggressive: +1 on initiative and +1 to strike or disarm. If the level of fear is fever pitched or five or more people are terrified, the zombie is also +1 attack per melee around.

Zombies Can See Without Eyes: The eyes glow with a red light inside empty eye sockets.

Keen Sense of Hearing: Can pinpoint location of a Zombie Moan after hearing it for only 30 seconds.

Impervious to Most Everything: Only decapitation, destroying a zombie's brain, and fire can kill a zombie. Does not need to breathe, and survives underwater and in a vacuum.

S.D.C. and Hit Point Regeneration: 1D6+3 S.D.C. and 2 Hit Points are automatically restored every hour. Extra P.P.E. may also restore S.D.C. and Hit Points at a rate of 1D6+2 S.D.C. and one Hit Point per extra P.P.E. point. See S.D.C. and Hit Points for details.

No Life Energy of Their Own: Zombies are cold, dark creatures without body heat or an aura. They cannot be seen by

infrared and thermal imaging optic systems. Rather, zombies register the same as a piece of timber.

**Go Dormant:** A stasis sleep that keeps zombies from decaying. Walking dead hide when they go dormant and can be waiting anywhere.

**People Slain by the Zombie Rise as One:** Victims slain in a zombie attack, their P.P.E. absorbed, rise as the walking dead within *2D4+4 minutes* after expiration.

**Skills of Note:** Prowl 55%, Seduction 50%, Tailing 75% and W.P. Knife or W.P. Blunt, plus pick an occupation the same as you would for an *Ordinary Person*. This is the job and skills the zombie had when it was alive. The Mock Zombie remembers all its old Occupational Skills and two Elective Skills, but they are all at only 45% skill proficiency and bonuses do NOT apply. All others are forgotten, and those remembered are often less than they were in life. The creature also remembers half of its life as a human; mainly the decade or two before it became a zombie.

**Attacks per Melee:** Three and may use weapons, guns and tools.

**Damage (S.D.C./Hit Points):**

**Bite:** 2D6 damage (and a chance of infection if the wound isn't treated shortly after receiving it). P.S. damage bonus does NOT apply to bite attacks.

**Head Butt:** 2D4 damage + P.S. damage bonus (if any).

**Punch/Claw Attack:** 1D6 damage + P.S. damage bonus (if any).

**Power Punch:** 2D6 damage + P.S. damage bonus (if any).

**Kick Attack:** 2D4 damage + P.S. damage bonus (if any).

**Weapon:** May use any.

**Note:** Leap Kick, other kicks, body flip, and martial art attacks are NOT possible by Mock Zombies.

**Bonuses:** +1 on initiative, +2 to strike, parry and dodge, high M.A. to evoke trust/belief or intimidation, masterful liars; also see Natural Abilities.

**Penalties:** -3 on Perception Rolls.

**Vulnerabilities:** Insane denial of its true undead nature, haunted by the zombie hunger and need to kill people and feed on their P.P.E., slow moving, can't swim, poor climbers, and head shots, decapitation and fire kill, severe cold reduces speed. Fear of fire holds the zombie at bay; Horror Factor 16.

**Note:** Although intelligent, Mock Zombies do not work with or command other zombies. To do so would admit that it, itself, is a zombie. Consequently, Mock Zombies tend to operate alone and avoid other zombies. Though it is rare, a pair or trio of Mock Zombies sometimes work together, probably rationalizing their fellowship as a collection of similarly "afflicted people." (Larger groups are not known, but might be possible.) Likewise, one or more Mock Zombies might rationalize killing people as revenge for being rejected and sent away as outcasts by their fellow human beings.

The zombie may also associate with a Death Cult Priest or be a member of a Death Cult, but this too is a rarity. Of course, Mock Zombies long to be accepted and embraced by their "fellow" humans, so if a human priest accepts it and manipulates it (probably as a cult defender, enforcer or spy) the Mock Zombie is likely to play along. Most of these in-

sane zombies seek to live among humans whenever and wherever they can, which may include bands of Retro-Savages.

Ironically, a Mock Zombie has no qualms about fighting and killing *zombies*, especially if it makes humans accept it into their group. Many express open hatred for the walking dead. By contrast, the walking dead *never* attack a Mock Zombie. They recognize it to be a zombie and ignore the Pretender. Only another Mock Zombie, Thinker or human may recognize a Mock Zombie as a threat or rival and respond accordingly to eliminate that threat.

## Pattern Zombies

### A Zombie Aberration

"If you see a zombie seeming to ignore you as it goes through the motions of work, you're dealing with a Pattern Zombie. A walking dead stuck in a pattern of its old life when it was human. Most of the time the zombie relives going to work and imitates the motions of its old job. I say 'imitate,' because the monster isn't actually accomplishing anything, it's just following the old pattern. Consequently, you may find one sitting at a computer keyboard typing away in front of a smashed out monitor in a building without power, or going through the motions of operating a machine, and so on.

"Most of the time, if you don't interrupt its pattern and leave the zombie alone, it ignores you. Still, I wouldn't hang around. Get out of there, or if you have the means, take it down. After all, the only good zombie is one with its brains bashed out."

— Brad Ashley, *Leader of the Reapers*



A Pattern Zombie is stuck reliving a memory fragment of its past life that it continually repeats (very similar to a *Haunting Entity*). In most cases, the pattern is some aspect of the job/work the zombie performed in life. Thus, the zombie may come to work every morning, punch-in and work whatever machine or go about whatever function it did in life for X number of hours, and punch-out. After a particular amount of time (when its imaginary shift is over), the Pattern Zombie either leaves to wander around aimlessly, or goes dormant at its workplace (50/50 chance of either). The next day, it is back to work as usual. The zombie always goes to the same location, even if that location is a burned out building or an open field, and goes about its imaginary business.

While it thinks it is at work, a Pattern Zombie is completely focused on doing its job. Good news for human survivors and scavengers, because it ignores them. A Pattern Zombie attacks only if its routine of work is interrupted, if it is attacked, and when it hears the Zombie Moan. A Pattern Zombie will always stop work to join in a convergence to eat. Otherwise, it goes about its imaginary business for hours on end. In fact, there have been reports in some places of Pattern Zombies showing up every day at the same factory or workplace to go about their daily routine. How strange must it be to see dozens of zombies (3D6x10) working along a shutdown assembly line or other factory operation busy going through the motions of doing their jobs. Slouchers and other zombies may be found wandering around (not working) at the same location, or laying dormant in the shadows of the workplace, but their presence is pure chance, not a routine of imaginary work.

Pattern Zombies are aptly named because they *act* out a pattern of activity almost like a performance by a mime. They move and pretend to operate machines that no longer work or mimic a job that no longer has purpose. Just as well, because these zombies have no actual skills, knowledge or ability to use tools, make repairs, or operate machines or vehicles. It's all just the pattern they are doomed to endlessly repeat.

**Also known as:** Shadow Workers and Factory Zombies.

**Alignment:** Considered Diabolic.

**Attributes:** I.Q. 1D4, M.E. 1D6, M.A. 1D4, P.S. 2x Strength when alive (typically 2D6+18), P.P. 1D6+2, P.E. 1D6+15, P.B. 2D4, Spd 1D6+6.

**Hit Points:** P.E. attribute number, but all Main Body S.D.C. must be depleted first before Hit Points can be affected.

**Note:** See *S.D.C. by Location* and *Hit Points* for more details.

**S.D.C. by Location:**

- \* Hands (2) – 1D6+4 each
- \* Arms (2) – 1D8+6 each
- \* Feet (2) – 1D6+4 each
- \* Legs (2) – 2D6+6 each
- \* Lower Jaw – 1D6+3
- \*\* Neck – 1D6+10
- \*\* Head – 2D6+14
- \*\*\* Main Body – 3D6+30

**Armor Rating:** 14

**Horror Factor:** 11

**P.P.E. 1D4**

**Natural Abilities:** Standard as previously described.

See Life Energy (P.P.E.): 9,000 feet (2,743.2 m) at night or in darkness.

Sense Life Energy (P.P.E.): 25 feet (7.6 m) to sense 1-6 people, 50 feet (15.2 m) to sense a group of 7-24 people, and 100 feet (30.5 m) to sense a group of 25 or more people. Half that range to sense animals. One quarter that range, 6.2 feet (1.9 m) when a zombie is dormant.

Recognize Human Scents: 83%. This also tells the zombie that humans are nearby, or have been present recently.

Track Humans by Scent: 18% chance, +10% if the human is sweaty or hasn't bathed in three or more days, +10% to follow the scent of blood, +5% if there is more than one human present in the same area, +5% to smell perfume, cologne or aftershave. All bonuses are accumulative.

Smell Fear in Humans: Makes zombies more aggressive: +1 on initiative and +1 to strike or disarm. If the level of fear is fever pitched or five or more people are terrified, the zombie is also +1 attack per melee around.

Zombies Can See Without Eyes: The eyes glow with a red light inside empty eye sockets.

Keen Sense of Hearing: Can pinpoint location of a Zombie Moan after hearing it for only 30 seconds.

Impervious to Most Everything: Only decapitation, destroying a zombie's brain, and fire can kill a zombie. Does not need to breathe, and survives underwater and in a vacuum.

S.D.C. and Hit Point Regeneration: 1D6+3 S.D.C. and 2 Hit Points are automatically restored every hour. Extra P.P.E. may also restore S.D.C. and Hit Points at a rate of 1D6+2 S.D.C. and one Hit Point per extra P.P.E. point. See S.D.C. and Hit Points for details.

No Life Energy of Their Own: Zombies, are cold, dark creatures without body heat or an aura. They cannot be seen by infrared and thermal imaging optic systems. Rather, zombies register the same as a piece of timber.

Go Dormant: A stasis sleep that keeps zombies from decaying. Walking dead hide when they go dormant and can be waiting anywhere.

People Slain by the Zombie Rise as One: Victims slain in a zombie attack, their P.P.E. absorbed, rise as the walking dead within 2D4+4 minutes after expiration.

**Skill of Note:** Climb 35%/20%.

**Attacks per Melee:** Two, usually by biting and hitting with fists.

**Damage (S.D.C./Hit Points):**

Bite: 2D6 damage (and a chance of infection if the wound isn't treated shortly after receiving it). P.S. damage bonus does NOT apply to bite attacks.

Head Butt: 2D4 damage + P.S. damage bonus (if any).

Punch/Claw Attack: 1D6 damage + P.S. damage bonus (if any).

Power Punch: Not possible.

Kick Attack: 2D4 damage + P.S. damage bonus (if any).

**Weapon:** Rare, but sometimes a zombie may use a melee weapon, tool or handheld object as a weapon to strike with.

**Note:** Leap Kick, other kicks, body flip, and martial art attacks are NOT possible by this zombie.

**Bonuses:** +1 to strike; also see Natural Abilities.

**Penalties:** -3 on initiative and -8 on Perception Rolls.

**Vulnerabilities:** Obsessed with their pattern, these zombies are the least aggressive, aware and responsive of all the walking dead. Dumb, animalistic, easily tricked, slow moving, can't swim, poor climbers, and head shots, decapitation and fire kill. Severe cold reduces speed. Fear of fire holds them at bay; Horror Factor 16.

## Using these Zombies in Other Game Settings

The zombies presented in **Dead Reign™** are suitable for use in **Beyond the Supernatural™**, **Nightbane®**, **Ninjas & Superspies™**, **Heroes Unlimited™**, **The Palladium Fantasy Role-Playing Game®** and any S.D.C. setting. The stats and abilities can be taken, *as is*, and dropped right into the other S.D.C. game setting. The only real difference is that the zombies in these other settings are not part of a Zombie Apocalypse, but probably the result of isolated incidents involving dark magic or supernatural forces, and encountered in much smaller numbers – one or two here, 10-20 there, maybe a hundred elsewhere (rare in large numbers).

For example, the zombies of **Dead Reign™** would fight nicely in the **Palladium Fantasy RPG®**. *Slouchers*, *Crawlers*, *Fast Attack Zombies*, *Pattern Zombies* and even the occasional *Thinker* or *Mock Zombie* might be found in any of the ancient ruins of the Old Kingdom, Baalgor Wastelands and Timiro Kingdom. *Flesh-Eating Zombies* seem like something you'd encounter in the Land of the South Winds and Yin-Sloth Jungles, while any of them seem likely to be encountered in the catacombs of the Western Empire and the dreaded Land of the Damned. In fact, if there are armies or hordes of walking dead it's in the Land of the Damned. The Eastern Territory, Great Northern Wilderness, and Island Kingdom of Bizantium are not likely to have much of a zombie problem. Any zombies found in those regions are the result of dark magic or walking dead carried by ships or magic and brought to these realms.

In **Nightbane®**, walking dead could be more of the Nightlords' minions and, while they are found in small numbers of 1-20 on Earth, there may be entire armies or cities and towns of them in the Nightlands.

In **Beyond the Supernatural™**, any of the zombies might be the work of voodoo, weird experiments, dark magic or supernatural powers.

### Mega-Damage Conversions

In **Rifts®** and other Mega-Damage settings, I would keep the zombies pretty much as they are in regard to behavior and abilities. That means **Dead Reign™** zombies used in **Rifts®** can survive in a vacuum, don't need to breathe, and remain impervi-

ous to toxic gas, disease, poison, drugs, cold, heat, etc. They are also impervious to all forms of magical and psionic mind control, fear, and similar psionics and magic that affects the mind, emotions or the senses. They are also impervious to pain.

Add the Hit Points and S.D.C. of the Main Body together to determine the total M.D.C. for the Rifts® zombie's Main Body.

The S.D.C. of limbs and body parts by location is translated, point for point, from S.D.C. to M.D.C. (18 S.D.C. = 18 M.D.C.) with two exceptions: double the M.D.C. of the neck and the head.

Lasers, ion beams, particle beams and most other energy weapons do NO damage to zombies. Neither do ordinary S.D.C. weapons.

Rail guns and other Mega-Damage projectile weapons do no damage to a zombie unless the attack is directed at the zombie's head/brain just as you might use a shotgun, and requires a "Called Shot" to hit.

Vibro-Blades do one third damage. Ordinary blades and melee weapons do no damage.

Magic melee weapons, including Techno-Wizard weapons, rune weapons and weapons made of dragon bones, inflict full damage.

Ordinary fire still terrifies zombies and inflicts Mega-Damage instead of S.D.C. damage. Meanwhile, magic fire and M.D. fire and plasma do double damage to the walking dead.

Zombies on Rifts Earth are typically encountered in small numbers (1-20) in most parts of the world. However, there could be hundreds to thousands in the demon haunted ruins of *Detroit*, *Windsor* and *Calgary* (zombies used to be a huge problem in the ruins of Old Chicago and St. Louis before the CS wiped them out). Zombies may also be found in the ruins of other major cities worldwide and are summoned and commanded by Necromancers in the *Magic Zone*, *Mexico*, parts of *South America*, the *Phoenix Empire* and parts of *Africa*, *France*, *Russia*, *India*, *China*, and wherever Death Cults and Necromancers operate.

Depending on what unfolds during the **Minion War™**, vast hordes or monstrous armies of zombies (any or all types) *might* be unleashed by the forces of Hades and/or Dyval, or perhaps by *other dark forces* on **Rifts Earth**, **Phase World** and throughout the **Three Galaxies**.

I've been talking about doing a large-scale zombie crisis set in **Rifts® Chaos Earth™** for at least 4-5 years now. (Hey, Taylor, this might be something you and I want to revisit.) My original vision for **Chaos Earth™** involved the Zombie Plague and some other weird stuff different from what we did in **Dead Reign™**. But until I get around to it, these zombies can be used with ease in **Chaos Earth™**. Perhaps a smaller scale Zombie Apocalypse hits the East Coast and spreads west, or rises in the south (Mexico) and spreads north. Or maybe there are just pockets – entire cities and towns – that have been taken over by the walking dead and perhaps the evil cult or Alien Intelligence that raised them!

Unleash your imagination, the possibilities are endless.

– Kevin Siembieda, Game Designer





# Fighting Zombies

By Brad Ashley, Leader of the Reapers – Excerpted from the *Reaper's Survival Guide*

You could write a whole other book on zombie combat. Thing is, I figure at this point, your head is probably already spinning with all the info I've handed you. So you know what? I'm just going to give you the best, fastest and dirtiest tricks in the book for dealing with zombies in combat. You'll figure the rest out on your own. This is enough to keep you alive.

**Trust your gut.** I know, I've said that more than a few times, but it's true. Trust your gut and it will keep you alive.

**It ain't paranoia if they are really out to get you,** and they are. Don't ever forget that.

**Stay alert. Think fast. React even faster.** I know I've said this all before too, but it's practically a mantra, here, among us Reapers.

You start to second guess yourself or hesitate and you're going to get yourself killed. Or worse, you're going to get someone else killed, or worst of all, you're going to get a whole lot of people killed. The day you start doing that is the day you are done as a zombie hunter. Step aside and do something else, you'll be saving more lives than your own.

**Save the lives you can and don't lose sleep over the ones you can't.** Hope that doesn't sound cruel, but it's the way things are. If you are doing everything you can possibly do, then that's

all anyone can ask of you. Don't be asking yourself to do the impossible. This is war. War is hell. People die. Innocent people. People who shouldn't. *It can't be helped.* Don't hate yourself for living. Make your life worth living by helping *as many others* as you can, any way you can, whether it's as a combatant or someone behind the front-line. Even if you save only one person, you've made a difference, brother. If you save many times more than that, you're a hero by anyone's standards. Keep doing it and in time, we will stem the tide.

**Stop the moan and you stop the convergence.** Zombies stop moaning when they are locked in combat, grappling or getting their head pounded into mush. You can try shoving a rag in the monster's mouth but you're likely to get your fingers bitten off. I'd rather shove a two-by-four or crowbar down its teeth. That will shut it up even if you don't kill it. Capiche?

**Head shots are great.** I love 'em. Two or three shots with a weapon or a mace and you've created a real corpse. But you need good aim and nerves of steel. Not everyone can do that. Kill them, stop them, by any means possible. *Dead is dead.* Just remember the zombie's head needs to be detached from its body or the brains destroyed for it to stay dead. That's important if you are on a killing mission, otherwise the damn things heal and you're fighting the same son of a bitch next week.

**When you're facing a whole bunch of walking dead,** forget about the moan and get the hell out.

Killing walking dead permanently don't mean squat when you're being besieged and you're fighting for your life or the lives of innocent people. I tell my crew all time, you're not helping anybody if you get yourself killed.

## Staying Alive Is Rule Number One

That's one of my mottos. Stay alive by whatever means necessary, and watch your brother's back.

**Keep moving to stay alive** is another Reaper motto. Don't box yourself in. Always have a way out of wherever you are. Better yet, have 10 ways out if you can. Plot them in your head wherever you go.

**I'm a firm believer that you are better off on the run**, moving and dodging and fighting for your life every step of the way, than finding someplace to make a stand. Stopping, unless you are confident you can get out of zombie sensing range and hide, is suicide. I don't care if it's a rooftop or a bunker, if you can't get out without fighting through a sea of zombies, you are dead. The Reapers have found the dead bodies of plenty of people who perished from starvation or thirst because they couldn't get out.

*Zombie sensing range* is only 25-50 feet (7.6 to 15.2 m) under most circumstances, but **the typical house** is only 50 feet (15.2 m) long, and 20-30 feet (6.1 to 9.1 m) wide. That means if surrounded by zombies they can sense you *wherever* you are inside. You can go into the basement or the second floor, but you're still in sensing range and the moaning and convergence continues. The pounding and search for a way in continues. Climb onto the roof of a house and the zombies can see you all the better and they will never leave.

Taller, larger commercial buildings are better, because they probably have fewer windows and are built with cinder block, but even most light industrial facilities are only one and two stories tall, leaving you in sensing range. Many have an office section that's nothing but a wall of glass windows, and most have only 3-5 exits and that probably includes a bay door at the loading dock.

I know I sometimes advise going up, but that's to escape a small group of zombies you can outdistance, trick or hide from. Going up can be a death trap. Me, I'd rather fight through a gauntlet of zombies.

## You don't have to kill a zombie to stop a zombie or get past one

That means take down zombies any way you can when you are trying to make a run for it and get out of town. Especially when you have innocent survivors in tow. What am I talking about? Here's some tips.

**A VITAL ZOMBIE COMBAT NOTE:** A zombie always tries to *grab and hold* its potential victim, then, **a)** attack by biting its held victim or hitting or strangling with its other hand, and **b)** waiting for other zombies to join the attack punching, kicking and biting the victim while the first one hangs on.

Don't let that happen and you have a fighting chance. Watch each other's back and your odds have just improved. Even if you have to stop for a few seconds (one or two melee rounds) to break a buddy loose from a zombie's grip, and then keep moving, you're doing fine.

*When you're looking to make an escape, fight smart, forget about killing, and fight to get away.*

**1. In a confined space, shooting out one or both of a zombie's legs will slow the damn thing down.** It may also block and slow down those behind it. This is especially effective if you are in a narrow, alley, corridor or stairwell. Cripple the zombies in the lead, and you slow down the whole kit and caboodle behind them. Sure, the others will climb over them, and keep coming, but you just bought yourself a moment or two and sometimes a few seconds makes the difference between life and death.

**2. Block their path.** Again, this is most effective in narrow spaces. You block their path and they are stalled. Even if it's something they can crawl over, it slows zombies down. Slouchers and many other zombies are poor at climbing and you'll buy yourself precious seconds, maybe minutes. (1D4 melee rounds to climb over modest obstacles, 2D4 melee rounds to climb over serious obstacles the size of a sofa, and 2D6+4 melee rounds to climb over a large obstacle like a crashed car.) The trick is the obstacle must be big, heavy or jammed tight, otherwise the walking dead just push it aside or smash it to pieces and press onward.

**3. For that matter, locking doors** behind you can buy precious time. I've got some boys in my crew who carry battery powered nail guns with them. Slam a door shut, pow, pow, pow, pow and it's secure. Maybe pump in a few more for good measure. This can work with an ordinary hammer and long wood nails if you work fast or have two or three people doing it. A well secured door can hold most zombies for a good while (1D4+2 minutes) before they break it down, punch or chop through it, or find another way in. Likewise, secure a gate or metal grate with a length of chain and a lock and you're golden. (It takes Slouchers and most zombies 1D4 melee rounds to climb even a typical cyclone fence or twice as long to knock it down.) A heavy security gate/grate or roll-down gate like those used by stores is even stronger and may keep a zombie horde out completely, forcing them to find another entrance or to wait and moan. There in lies the problem, you have to be sure you are not locking yourself into a dead end. You get surrounded by zombies and they'll wait you out. Sure, as a general rule they leave after several minutes if they can't get to you. And if they can't see, hear or sense your life energy, most will leave after 15-30 minutes. But they know you are there. If they keep catching glimpses, or hear you or can sense your presence, I've seen the damn things wait for days. Maybe 10-60% wander off after 10 or 20 hours, but the rest stay. And when you try to make a run for it, or a Thinker finally figures out a way in, the assault is renewed, the moaning starts and others come.

**4. Drop them down a hole or lock up them up tight.** That can be as simple as locking a parcel of zombies in a room. A better tactic is getting a bunch of zombies into a basement and blowing up or chopping out the stairs. Bingo, the zombies are trapped with no way up. Only a Thinker might be smart enough to figure out they can climb up each other to create a human pyramid, but knowing that and getting the dumb brutes to do it are two different things; not likely (01-25% chance). And if you can secure the door at the top of the stairs, it doesn't matter, they are trapped for good. Pit traps and moats can be effective too, though a zombie is likely to manage to climb out sooner or later even if it takes days.



**5. Pin them to the wall.** I mean that literally. We've found zombies have a problem with getting impaled. They lack good coordination so they have trouble getting unstuck. A heavy crossbow bolt will pin a zombie to a wall like a butterfly. It'll take the monster (1D6+1 melee actions) to pull its hand, arm, foot, or leg through the bolt. Stake the main body to a wall or tree with a long, thick piece of wood at least the length of a baseball bat, but thick like a fence post, plank, two-by-four or at least as thick as a man's arm and you'll pin the thing for a good while (2D6+6 melee rounds) before it works its way off. A spear or javelin is too thin and the zombie will walk forward and pull right off of it in a couple seconds (takes one melee action). But a thick piece of wood or pipe as described will do the trick. So will long punji-stick type traps.

**6. Trap a limb.** Slamming a zombie's hand, arm, foot or leg into a trap, a door, a window, or whatever and securing the item to keep it held tight will hold the damned thing for awhile. A stuck zombie will keep pulling and pounding until it breaks what's holding it and gets free. If it can't break free after 9-24 minutes (3D6+6), the monster will chew and tear its own limb off (which takes another 2D6 minutes).

**7. Avoiding the grasp of a zombie.** Inevitably, there will be mad dashes through crowds of zombies. Zombies who will grab at the fleeing characters. The player of the fleeing character rolls 1D20 and the zombie (G.M.) rolls 1D20 – high roll wins, defender (the character) always wins ties. If the character wins, he dodges past the zombie without getting grabbed – dodge bonuses may be applied to the roll to avoid being grabbed. If the zombie wins, the character is grabbed and must fight his way out of the monster's clutches. Teammates can help.

**8. Pulling someone from the grip of a zombie is difficult.** Walking dead may, **01-50%** hold their victim with both hands

and attack with bites and head butts, or **51-00%** hold with one hand and hit with the other as well as bite.

**It requires a combined P.S. 50% higher than the zombie's own P.S.** to pull or pry a captive from the zombie's grip. That's typically a combined P.S. of 36 or higher. It is usually easier to blast the zombie or chop off its grasping limb.

**9. Killing doesn't matter, take off its arm.** When a walking dead grabs your buddy, target the arm. Personally, I'd go for chopping off the hand at the wrist. (**Game Note:** Deplete the S.D.C. of the hand, it has less points than the arm, and the character held by the zombie is cut loose!) But taking the arm off at the elbow or shoulder works just as well. (**Game Note:** Deplete the S.D.C. of the arm and it is chopped away from the zombie and its captive is freed. *Requires* a "Called Shot" and the roll to strike must exceed the zombie's Natural A.R. 14 to do damage. A roll of 5-14 hits but does no damage and the captive is still held. A roll of 1-4 misses and *may* hit your friend in the zombie's clutches. To determine if the missed strike hits the victim you're trying to save, the G.M., or the attacker, needs to roll another 1D20. **01-10** the failed strike at the zombie hits his captive, have the attacker roll for damage! **11-20** means, whew, the attack missed both the zombie and his victim. Try again? A roll of 15 or higher, including your combat bonuses, is a success, roll for damage. A Natural 20 always does double damage, and in this circumstance, should be an automatic success regardless of the actual damage inflicted. Hey, it's a Natural 20!). Of course, shooting or chopping a zombie's hand or arm off only staggers it a bit and two seconds later the zombie is reaching for you or your buddy with its other hand. Run! Don't be standing around admiring your handiwork.

**10. Blast what you can and hope for the best.** Never leave your fellow man behind if you can avoid it. When a zombie grabs your buddy, give it one or both barrels of your shotgun right in the chest (Main Body)! The impact (even if the blast doesn't penetrate the Natural A.R. to inflict damage) may be enough to stagger the zombie and get it to let go of your pal. (**Game Note:** If the roll to strike is 15 or higher and exceeds the zombie's A.R. of 14, the blast does damage to its main body, the zombie's grip is broken, and the shooter's comrade is free to run away. If the roll to strike was 5-14, under the zombie's A.R., have the shooter roll 1D20 again and the G.M. rolls 1D20 for the zombie. High roll wins. In this case, the shooter trying to protect/save his friend is using the attack as a defensive move to enable his buddy to escape/break away from the monster, and the defender always wins ties! If the zombie's roll is higher than the shooter, the creature maintains its grip on his friend. If the roll was 1-4 it misses. Try again? Someone else try? Heck, if the victim has a weapon, he can try to free himself the same way.)

**11. Blast them and bash them to get zombies to move out of your way.** Same principle as above, when you're running a zombie gauntlet, the goal is to escape. It doesn't matter if the zombie is killed, all you want to do is clear a path, even if it's for a few seconds or five feet (1.5 m) at a time, so you and your crew can slip past the hungry, flailing, grasping, walking dead and keep on moving. Trust me, it works. (**Game Note:** Trust

Brad Ashley, *it does work*. In play tests this worked like a dream. If there is a zombie blocking your path or grabbing at you from the side you can blast it or hammer it with a blunt weapon. Same as above, the shooter/hitter rolls 1D20 and the G.M. rolls 1D20 for the zombie. High roll wins. The shooter or person swinging with his crowbar, the butt of his gun, or other blunt weapon is doing so as a defensive action to knock the zombie out of the way, so he wins ties. Thus, if the shooter's/clubber's roll is high, the zombie staggers backward or to the side and gets out of the way without any chance of grabbing at the character. If the zombie wins the high roll, the character must dodge to avoid getting grabbed in its iron grip or parry the grasping attack. Failure means he's grabbed by the zombie and all out combat is likely to ensue. A successful roll to parry or dodge means the character slipped past and keeps on running or can turn around and blast it before it grabs someone else.)

**12. Bombard the body.** While a head shot has the potential of killing a zombie immediately, attacks leveled against the main body will eventually take a zombie out of action, especially if there are multiple humans attacking the same zombie. Inflict enough damage and the zombie goes down. Have enough people on the thing and it goes down in 15-30 seconds (two melee rounds). *Smash out the brains to make sure it is dead* only if you have the luxury of time to do so. Otherwise, keep moving.

*The best weapons to use are blunt objects, curved blades, and guns that inflict heavy damage. Long-range sniper attacks* require a high-powered rifle and head shots to be most effective. **Explosives** can be effective against zombies, but they are very messy, create shrapnel that can hurt you and innocent people and valuable property caught in the blast radius, and the explosion attracts zombies from all around.

**13. Fire scares and kills zombies.** It bears repeating that the walking dead fear fire (Horror Factor of 16), but using fire is tricky. I say avoid setting zombies on fire. Use fire, especially burning torches and flamethrowers if you can get your hands on them, to clear a path through a zombie horde and get out of Dodge. Whereas most other attacks are a dull thump that is barely noticed by walking dead, fire hurts them bad. It burns and consumes the undead. Even a handheld burning torch will cause 1-6 zombies to back way 1D4+4 feet (1.5 to 2.4 m). Likewise, a wall or circle of fire will keep even hundreds of zombies at bay, but does not cause them to flee. Zombies may back away from fire, but it doesn't send them running away. They will seek a way around the flames to reach their prey, or wait till the fire burns out.

**Using fire is dangerous.** Fire can be a tool and weapon to use against zombies, but is *not* an ideal method of killing the walking dead, especially not in close combat.

*Set a zombie on fire and you are likely to have a big problem.* They are too stupid to know how to put themselves out (unless a Thinker is around to help), so instead of rolling on the ground to smother the flames or finding water to douse the fire, the zombie simply continues to lumber toward his human prey to kill him! This is a problem for the human character(s) because when the zombie hits or bites him, the monster does its usual damage

+1D6 fire damage. If the zombie grabs and holds onto a human character, the monster hangs on with its usual vise-like grip, burning the character (3D6 damage per melee round) and has a 01-80% likelihood of setting the human character's own clothes on fire (inflicts an additional 3D6 damage per melee round until the fire is extinguished)! It doesn't stop there as burning flesh and fat liquefy and drop to the ground, they set combustible material (carpet, rugs, wood floors, dry grass, etc.) on fire. Likewise, easily combustible materials (curtains, nylon, cloth and clothing, etc.) touched by the fire engulfed zombie will catch fire and burn. Yes, the fire will cause most of the other zombies to back away and if the whole place goes up in flames they will flee to a safe distance. However, any zombies that catch fire will attack in a fit of murderous rage. Before you know it, the entire room, house or building may be on fire and any zombies that caught fire continue to press their attack as you try to avoid them and the fire, and get out alive!





## Other Menaces

### Retro-Savages

*“Many survivors still cling to their old ways and expect help to arrive from somewhere somehow. It’s not coming.*

*“There is no government. No army. No hope for those who refuse to embrace redemption. It was avarice, greed, sin and technology that brought about the Almighty’s wrath, first with the Wave and then at the hand of God’s Children – the walking dead.*

*“Those too blind or too proud to change are doomed. They scavenge the ruins and live off the rotting corpse of a dead civilization like maggots. They are afraid to ask themselves what happens when the canned food, bottled water, guns and fuel run out.*

*“They call us savages, but we are the ones who have accepted God’s will and embrace a new, better way of life. We have recognized the signs and accept a future without advanced technology. We are the ones who will survive. We are the chosen. Like Adam and Eve cast out of Paradise into a hard, cold world, we have been cast out of our cities and torn away from our decadent lives. We, my children, have been given a great gift: a second chance. Like Adam and Eve, we too go forth into*

*the wilderness to return to our roots and embrace nature and the purity of hard work and a simple, honest way of life. We live off the land, till the soil, grow crops, raise animals and hunt God’s creatures, just as the Almighty intended for us. That’s why, in his divine wisdom, God has left the wilderness mostly untouched by his Avenging Children.*

*“No, it is the fools who cling to the old ways, living in fear and denial, who are living like savages. We live wholesome lives free of the technology that tempted and defiled humanity. And may God have mercy on the souls of any man who tries to lead us astray and back into damnation, for he shall be struck down with a noble vengeance.”*

*– Reverend Bartholomew Trask, A Retro-Savage Leader*

To put it simply, Retro-Savages are survivors who have given into to fear, superstition and savagery. And some would even say, insanity.

Their world view is extreme. Most believe the Wave and the Zombie Apocalypse is the wrath of God. A way to wipe away the parts of human society that were too selfish, decadent and cruel, and start anew. They call the zombies “God’s Children,” and a walking testament of what we brought upon ourselves. To them, it seems clear that it is the zombies’ purpose to tear down civilization and destroy the trappings of science and technology that led to man’s fall. Retro-Savages blame television, computers, the Internet, science and technology, in general, for humanity’s decline into instant self-gratification and depravity. The zombies are God’s Avenging Children sent to destroy that sinful world and all human beings who try to cling to their old despicable ways. And what better way to send that message and punish the fallen people than to turn the living into mindless zombies to tear it all down? The fact that most zombies stay in the cities and towns is, to Retro-Savages, further proof of God’s obvious intent and the message. After all, the hand of doom is the very people who had become ugly, selfish, godless monsters in life.

As a result, Retro-Savages have forsaken most of the trappings of technology and have reverted to a Nineteenth Century lifestyle and an agrarian society. At first glance, Retros may seem harmless and reminiscent, in some ways, to the way of life lived by the Amish. They raise crops and livestock, have work animals, use only basic modern guns and tools, embrace hard work and live by the sweat of their own brow to survive and please the Almighty. In addition to the use of modern guns, ammo and simple tools (nothing electric powered), they also use modern fishing gear, animal traps at least for now, most Retros condone the wearing of clothing salvaged from the old world, as well as the use of plastic containers and similar items. Under extreme conditions, some Retro-Savages may even drive an automobile or truck or use a flashlight or gun scope. However, there is *no* electricity nor gas heat, no power tools, radios, walkie-talkies or computers, no binoculars or other modern optics, no cameras, televisions or DVDs, no electric appliances or generators, no battery operated devices, nor modern vehicles, aircraft, medicine, or other trappings of the modern age before the Zombie Apocalypse. The land is tilled and crops planted and harvested by hand, and all aspects of life have reverted to living off nature “as God intended.” That means raising livestock, fish-

ing, hunting, gathering fruit and the bounty of nature and living off the land are all acceptable ways of life. Science, technology and devices from the old urban communities are taboo.

The world view of the Retro-Savages does not stop there. They completely rebuke science and technology, and reject all people who cling to it. Thus, survivors who don't share their views are regarded as dangerous sinners and fools awaiting the Almighty's punishment at the hands of his Children. This creates a powerful and pervasive "them and us" attitude between Retro-Savages and all other survivors. Worse, since the Retros see everyone else as sinners awaiting God's Wraith (to be killed and turned into zombies), they have no regard for other people, look upon outsiders with disgust and disdain, and seek to help move them along to their *just punishment*. That last part means *feeding people to the zombies!* Retro-Savages do not see this as evil, cruel or even as murder because, a) it is God's will, and b) they are not doing the actual killing themselves; murder is, after all, a sin.

To implement God's will, Retros capture survivors whenever the opportunity arises. Lone individuals and small groups of five or less people are the most likely to be targeted. Women and children are sometimes given a pass, as might an extremely kindly traveler who doesn't seem to use much tech (no vehicle, etc.). However, "City Sinners" or "the Damned," as the Retro-Savages call them, driving a vehicle and laden with modern technology, as well as people who talk about fighting zombies and rebuilding human civilization, are all prime subjects for victimization. First the target is likely to get a lecture about the evils of the time before the Wave, and then given a chance to renounce the old ways, forsake technology and join their clan. If the visitor joins their group he is saved and welcomed into their community.

If the visitor rejects the invitation, no matter how politely, he becomes one of "the Damned" in their eyes and a candidate for the Lord's divine punishment. This entails the visitor being taken captive, usually at gunpoint or by a band of men who vastly outnumber him. The individual is then stripped of his belongings, except for the clothes on his back, and beaten by the men while the women pray God has mercy on his eternal soul. The victim(s) is then bound and taken, on foot or by horse drawn wagon, to a place zombies are known to frequent on a regular basis. There, the victim(s) is tied or chained to a tree, lamppost, fencing, car bumper, large piece of debris or whatever is appropriate, and left out in the open. The Retro-Savages sing a psalm to attract the zombies to the area and leave the poor sinner(s) to his deserved fate. Actually, the zombies periodically wander to this area because it has become known as a place where they can find food tied up nice and neat, like a Thanksgiving Day feast. If the Retro group doesn't have a designated zombie feeding post (always a distance away from their own community), they either dump their captives at the edge of a nearby city, or tie them to something on the outskirts of town and leave them for the zombies or wild dogs to find. Such are the ways of the self-righteous Retro-Savages.

There are at least several hundred, perhaps a few thousand, clans of Retro-Savages scattered across North America. Each movement has its own leader and Council of Elders, bylaws and procedures for sending innocent people into the arms of zombies, but they all share the same outlook on life and basic beliefs

about technology, science and God (as described). Most Retros live in the countryside, where they establish homesteads and small, isolated, farming communities. Others wander the land as nomadic tribes of hunters and gatherers much like the Native Americans and settlers of old. The permanent settlements tend to have the larger populations (2D6x10+35), while the traveling bands are smaller (1D6x10+12). Whether traveling clan or countryside settlement, Retro-Savages are always close-knit communities of like-minded people ready and willing to help each other out. Everyone in their community contributes to the survival of the group and all outsiders are looked upon with suspicion and disdain.

Retro-Savages are very aggressive toward, and intolerant of, outsiders. They are easily provoked and incredibly dangerous when their beliefs are challenged, they are mocked or embarrassed, or a leader is threatened or killed. Retros hate *Reapers* and *Apocalyptic Soldiers* most of all, because they actively slaughter the Children of God (zombies). Meanwhile, *Shepherds of the Damned*, *Hound Masters*, *Scroungers* and most *Survivors* are regarded as deluded, corrupt, duplicitous "City Sinners" or "the Damned" condemned to inevitable destruction. If an outsider finds himself among Retros, even over a simple matter like asking directions, he's likely to be ignored or hear, "Your kind isn't wanted around here. You best be moving on." It is advice he'd be wise to follow before he becomes a meal for a zombie. It is important to note that Retro-Savages do not murder people, per se, but they are not afraid to protect themselves. Push too hard, threaten or make the Retros angry, and outsiders will find themselves looking down the business end of a rifle or shotgun. Killing in self-defense is not murder, and Retro-Savages are deadly serious about protecting their families, friends, farms, beliefs and belongings. "Get off my land now, or prepare to die, stranger," is a serious threat.

## Retro-Savage, Non-Player Character & Villain

**Note:** Not recommended as a player character.

**Alignment:** Considered evil or crazy and dangerous by most outsiders, but are Principled or Scrupulous toward their own people.

**Attributes:** Standard. See the *Character Creation* rules.

**Horror Factor:** 10 when facing a threatening group of them.

**P.P.E.** 1D4+2

**Level of Experience:** 1D4 or as desired by the Game Master. This is a new life as Retro-Savages and their experience is limited.

**O.C.C. Bonuses:** +2 to Perception Rolls, +3D6+10 S.D.C., +1D6 to P.S., +1D4 to P.E. and Spd attributes.

**O.C.C. Skills:** Whatever "tech" skills they might have known before the Wave, they have forsaken to live a simple life, thus most are considered farmers, simple laborers, hunters and protectors who live off the land and fight to protect their new lifestyle. **Note:** If you'd like, you can roll for an occupation the same as you'd do for a Survivor/ordinary person. This indicates the Retro-Savage's previous life in modern society. Any Domestic, Physical, W.P. and Wilderness skills are likely to be suitable for life as a Retro-Savage, all other skills are forsaken so there is no reason to make note of them

or their level of proficiency – a Retro will *not* use his old tech skills.

**Retro-Savage Skills (start at first level):**

- Animal Husbandry or Land Navigation (+14%)
- Barter or Breed Dogs (+10%)
- Botany or Brewing: Medicinal (+15%)
- Brewing or Camouflage (+15%)
- Cook or Play Musical Instrument (+10%)
- Dance or Rope Works (+10%)
- Gardening or Fishing (+10%)
- Herding or Track & Trap Animals (+15%)
- Hunting or Sniper
- Horsemanship or Astronomy & Navigation (+10%)
- Identify Plants & Fruit or Prowl (+10%)
- Housekeeping or Land Navigation (+12%)
- Leather Work or Carpentry (+10%)
- Physical Labor or Outdoorsmanship
- Preserve Food or Recognize Weapon Quality (+15%)
- Running or Swimming (+10%)
- Sewing or Skin & Prepare Animal Hides (+15%)
- Tailing or Wilderness Survival(+5%)
- Veterinary Science or Tracking (People; +10%)
- W.P. Ancient: Two of choice.
- W.P. Modern: Two of choice.

Hand to Hand: Basic, which may be changed to Expert for the cost of two Retro-Savage Skills (above) or to Martial Arts at the cost of three New Retro-Savage Skills.

**Elective Skills:** None.

**Secondary Skills:** Select two Secondary Skills from the Secondary Skill List in the Skills section at levels 1, 5, 10 & 15. These are additional areas of knowledge that do not get any bonuses, other than a possible bonus for a high I.Q. All Secondary Skills start at the base skill level.

**Standard Equipment:** 1D4+1 sets of work clothing, one set of Sunday best clothes, 2 pairs of work gloves, boots, jacket, wide brim hat or baseball cap, two canteens or water skin, 40 foot (12.2 m) coil of rope, flint and steel, 2D6+2 candles, small hatchet (1D6 damage), pocket knife (1D4 damage), backpack, mirror, and some personal items. Most wear some sort of religious symbol on a chain around their neck.

**Tools of the Trade:** Retro-Savages are generally hunters or farmers.

If a hunter, the character has 1D4 skinning knives, 2D4 animal snares, fishing poles, lures and line, appropriate hunting weapon and ammo (bullets or arrows), 1D4 large sacks, extra rope, tent, bedroll, blanket, box of wooden matches, rain poncho or hooded cloak, food rations for 1D4 weeks, and is likely to have a light suit of body armor.

If a farmer, the character owns a variety of farm/gardening tools, including 1D6+2 shovels of varying size from large to small, wood chopping axe, a rake, hoe, pitchfork, scythe (2D6 damage), machete or sickle (1D6 damage), wagon, a workhorse, oil lamp (and oil), 4D6+24 canning jars, 4D6 containers of various types and sizes, pots of varying sizes,

frying pan, 6 gallon kettle, cooking utensils, eating utensils, and a variety of other basic farm tools and gear.

**Weapons:** One for each W.P. and 1Dx6x10+48 extra rounds for each.

**Trade Goods:** \$1D4x1,000 worth of trade goods, probably animal furs, meat, crops, canned foods, herbs and livestock.

## Death Cults

### Priests, Cultists, & Zombie Protectors

With the collapse of human civilization, death, and the rise of the walking dead, it makes perfect sense that cults worshipping chaos, death and the walking dead would spring up. What is surprising is how quickly they have appeared.

### Terror Cultists

Most Death Cults appeal to frightened survivors desperate to find a way to save themselves and their families. They'd eat a dead rat and worship anything if it kept them alive and kept the zombies away. This is especially true in cities, where survival and even escape seems impossible. These are the people who find urban gangs and Death Cults as a last ditch hope for survival. The fact that they may, ironically, lose their own humanity or very souls is a sad price they are willing to pay, or a fact lost on them.

*Terror Cults* are small, isolated, one of a kind survivor communities usually found in urban environments. Such cults are usually founded and ruled by a charismatic and ruthless control freak looking to build his own power base. Built on fear and desperation in the first place, the Cult Leader uses intimidation, coercion and terror to keep his followers under his control. The members of these cults are so scared of dying or becoming a zombie, they do anything their leader(s) tells them to do. Even if it's something cruel or terrible, the cultists obey because they are afraid life without their Cult Leader to guide them will be worse than it is now, or that they will die without him.

**The typical leader of a Terror Cult** is someone, or *something*, who has the power, savvy, special ability or special resource (weapons, tank, fortified hideout, etc.) to keep people safe, as long as they obey his every command. Most Terror Cultists believe this is the end time – *the end of the world* – and nothing anybody does can stop the death, destruction or the obliteration of the human race. They are fatalists who believe law, order and morality no longer apply (at least not to them), and they can do whatever they want, especially when it comes to their own survival. Many are half-crazy and the rest are totally insane, violent, decadent and murderous. The Cult Leader and his followers claim to see a supernatural force or some sort of dark fate behind the rise of the dead. They see the zombies as the harbingers of a new age on Earth, and try to live by the standards of an imagined dark god of the zombies.

As members of a cult, the people follow a leader who is often seen as having spiritual insight, superhuman ability, or as being a dark god or prophet. Many worship a historical or newly imagined Death God, Chaos, or the zombies themselves. Most Terror Cults pattern their religion and practices after *the zombies*, which means they see other *human survivors* as a means to

an end – pawns, dupes, and playthings in a new horrible reality, or victims to satisfy their own demented desires and wild machinations. Many sacrifice their fellow man to the zombies or in rituals to the imaginary dark god they worship. Others capture and eat their fellow humans as *food!* Half of all Terror Cults are *cannibals* who hunt, capture, torture, and abuse innocent people. When they have had their fun and are done with their captives, the Terror Cultists kill their victims and *eat them*. Most Terror Cultists embrace chaos, worship death, taunt fate and see the world as a dog eat dog jungle where one can justify anything. The Cult Leader takes that one step further by becoming king of the hill within in his closed community. An all-powerful tyrant, he takes whatever level of power he can, makes life and death decisions, commands his followers and asks of them things to test their loyalty and his range of power over them, and enjoys life at the expense of others. A nihilist, he knows this cannot last, but intends to enjoy his reign of power for as long as he can. Sadly, scores of people may suffer or die because of him.

### Random Terror Cult Leader Table

Game Masters, to determine the leader of a Terror Cult and the cult's orientation, *roll percentile* on the following table or pick one. **Note:** In all cases, the Terror Cult Leader is revered by his followers as a despot *king* or worshiped as a cruel *god*. The leader is charismatic (M.A. 2D4+22), confident, manipulative, ruthless and self-serving. In most cases, he or she is also cruel, savage and merciless, a fear-monger who uses terror as the source of his/her power and to control and manipulate others. *Kill the leader*, and there is a 90% likelihood the group falls apart and scatters to the wind like cowardly jackals. *Size* of a typical Terror Cult is 3D6+10.

**01-20% One to 1D4+1 Wicked Apocalyptic Soldiers or Reapers Gone Bad.** These tin-plated, self-appointed gods use their combat skills, abilities and weapons (including a special resource?) to keep people alive and under their thumb. They are nihilists who have given up on life, and plan on living it up before they die.

These guys probably still hate zombies and run their operation more like a military compound than a church or religion. They have established a safe haven somewhere in, or on the outskirts of a city, city suburb or town where zombies can't get to them (fortified estate, bunker like compound, secured tall building, secret underground hideout, etc.).

The followers are people who don't know where else to turn so they let this arrogant tyrant(s) lord over them in exchange for relative safety. They may not like what their leader(s) does, but they accept it and obey. On the other hand, some followers (1D6x10%) worship the cult leader as a genius, savior, or god. Those who revere their leader obey him/them without question and have adopted his initiatives, attitudes and world view as their own. These loyal followers and their leader(s) are the most dangerous members of the cult. In many instances, the leader has several wives or concubines who will die for him. **Note:** Cults of this kind may have twice the usual number of followers of a typical Terror Cult.

**21-40% Evil Half-Living.** This fiend has discovered he can get Slouchers and Crawlers (only) to follow him when he pretends to be on the trail of human prey. Consequently, he is able to lead them away from his band of cultists. This has enabled

the Cult Leader to clear out a building in the heart of the city and secure the lower level entrances to keep the typical zombie away from him and "his people." His followers probably live on a fourth or fifth floor and rely on their leader to tell them what to do and how to continue to survive. They may worship their leader as some sort of Death God or demigod, or consider him a superhuman savior. The leader enjoys the power and all the benefits that come with being regarded as more than human, wielding it with savage ruthlessness. If the Half-Living becomes tired of his gig as god or tyrant lord, he can just walk away and leave his followers to fend for themselves. After all, most walking dead ignore the Half-Living so he can come and go anywhere. It is a threat he wields like a sword to keep his minions in line.

To ensure the zombies all around them stay away, and that they continue to follow the evil Half-Living, he and his cult followers capture other humans, much like Retro-Savages, and deliver them to zombies at a location, or several different locations, not too far away. This way, the zombies in the area recognize the Half-Living as a reliable source of food. They trust when he moans and leads them to a particular place, because when he does so, *food* (living humans) is usually present. Anyone who threatens, challenges or defies him is likely to meet this fate.

**41-60% Evil Mock Zombie.** This horrible creature sees himself as the divine bridge between life and death. Odds are,





the crazy monster actually believes he *is* a god or demigod. Like the Half-Living, the Mock Zombie controls zombies, only he does it through 1D4+1 Thinkers who serve as his undead lieutenants and manage the zombies around them. The Mock Zombie has his worshipers and zombie legion (2D6+6 walking dead per Thinker under his influence) capture human survivors. More delusional and twisted than other leaders, the Mock Zombie is likely to have his walking dead effectively chase survivors right into his clutches by pretending to be human himself, and offering a sanctuary from the zombies chasing them. (“Here! Quickly, run in here where it’s safe. They can’t get in. There are a bunch of us humans safe in here. Let us help.”)

Indeed, when a Mock Zombie is the leader of a Terror Cult, he makes certain he (or she) is getting enough P.P.E. to *look* completely human. Furthermore, the cultists are all human and pretend to be good guys: fellow survivors with lofty and heroic goals, and other noble people. The pretense lasts long enough to catch the real heroes (including the player characters) off guard and set them up for capture, a zombie ambush and other nefarious situations that will put their lives in jeopardy, lead to their capture, pit them against rivals, or trick them into helping the cultists before they are fed to zombies. As is the nature of the Mock Zombie, it is all about lies, deception, trickery and *pretense*. Nothing is as it appears and danger lurks everywhere.

**61-80% Lord of Chaos.** The Cult Leader is an ordinary human, but a madman who seeks to become the Lord of the Dead and immortal. He (or she) is not only unafraid of death and zombies, but fascinated with *death* and *immortality* on an obsessive level. The Cult Leader searches to uncover the secrets of immortality by studying (read: torturing) humans, the Half-Living, Mock Zombies, other walking dead and Death Priests. This nutcase is sadistic and deranged, so he may drink or bathe in human blood (or both), eat raw flesh, and engage in all types of sick “experiments” that involve torture, the study of pain, and near-death experiences upon the living and zombies alike. Some even manage to secure the help of a Flesh Eater, Thinker or Mock Zombie as a tortured slave, court jester, or servant. Such slaves have been conditioned and trained, like Pavlov’s dogs, through torture and fear. They loathe the Lord of Chaos, but without a means of escape or practical way to kill him, they obey – for now. The Lord of Chaos always has 2-6 elite guards (equivalent of Soldiers or Reapers) at his side. They are elite, not just in title, but enjoy power, opulence and privilege second only to the man (or woman) they protect. **Note:** Everything about the Chaos Lord, his elite, and to a lesser degree, his followers involves excess, gluttony, decadence, depravity and the trappings of wealth in a setting of death. Everywhere are skulls, death motifs, suffering and the walking dead. The whole idea being to show that the Lord of Chaos and his followers are in control of their fate, do not fear death, and are masters of the walking dead. It is all an illusion, of course, but this is the terrible and terrifying life the Chaos Lord creates and his worshipers embrace.

He (or she) has probably secured control of a medium to tall building. His worshipers (this character demands to be worshiped as a god or Demon Lord) probably live on one of the higher or top levels of the building, while the lower levels are filled with torture chambers, laboratories and prison cells/holding areas. There will be areas where humans are studied and tor-

ured, another for animals, one for Half-Living, and one for zombies. There is also a giant penned in area and perhaps pits where zombies are kept and tormented. (How long can a zombie go without eating? What happens to it if you don’t allow it to go dormant by dangling a human near it, but out of its reach? Can a zombie be driven mad by starvation? What’s the aging and deterioration process? How and why does life energy feed and restore zombies? How can the cult leader access this energy for himself to become immortal? And many other questions are the catalyst for his studies.)

There will also be zombies kept in pens where human captives are pitted against them in gladiatorial style games enjoyed by the Dark Lord and his depraved followers. Zombies of various types (Fast Attack or Flesh Eaters, as well as Slouchers or Crawlers) may be chained to walls or near entrances or in a particular room or stairwell where they serve as watchdogs or guard animals. One or more Mock Zombies, Thinkers and Pattern Zombies may be among his captives and used as lab rats in his twisted experiments.

Captive women may be forced to have sex with him, impregnated, and their babies taken and fed to zombies or offered up in a weird sacrifice to an imaginary Death God or Lord of Chaos, or eaten by the mad cult leader himself.

This cult is a shop of horrors and the cult leader is the master of torment. His followers are likely to consider him a mad genius on one hand, and fear him as a murderous tyrant on the other. They are too afraid of him to defy, insult or lose his favor, because they know to do so leads to torture and death, so they obey. **Note:** Cults under this dominant maniac may have twice the usual number of followers of a typical Terror Cult. Also, more than any other Terror Cult, Chaos Cults are likely to help zombies by reattaching lost limbs and decapitated heads, and deliberately luring scavengers, survivors and members of rival cults into conflict with zombies just to watch the outcome. This is done to promote the advancement of chaos, to please a Death God, to study how zombies and humans react in a crisis situation, or for pure entertainment.

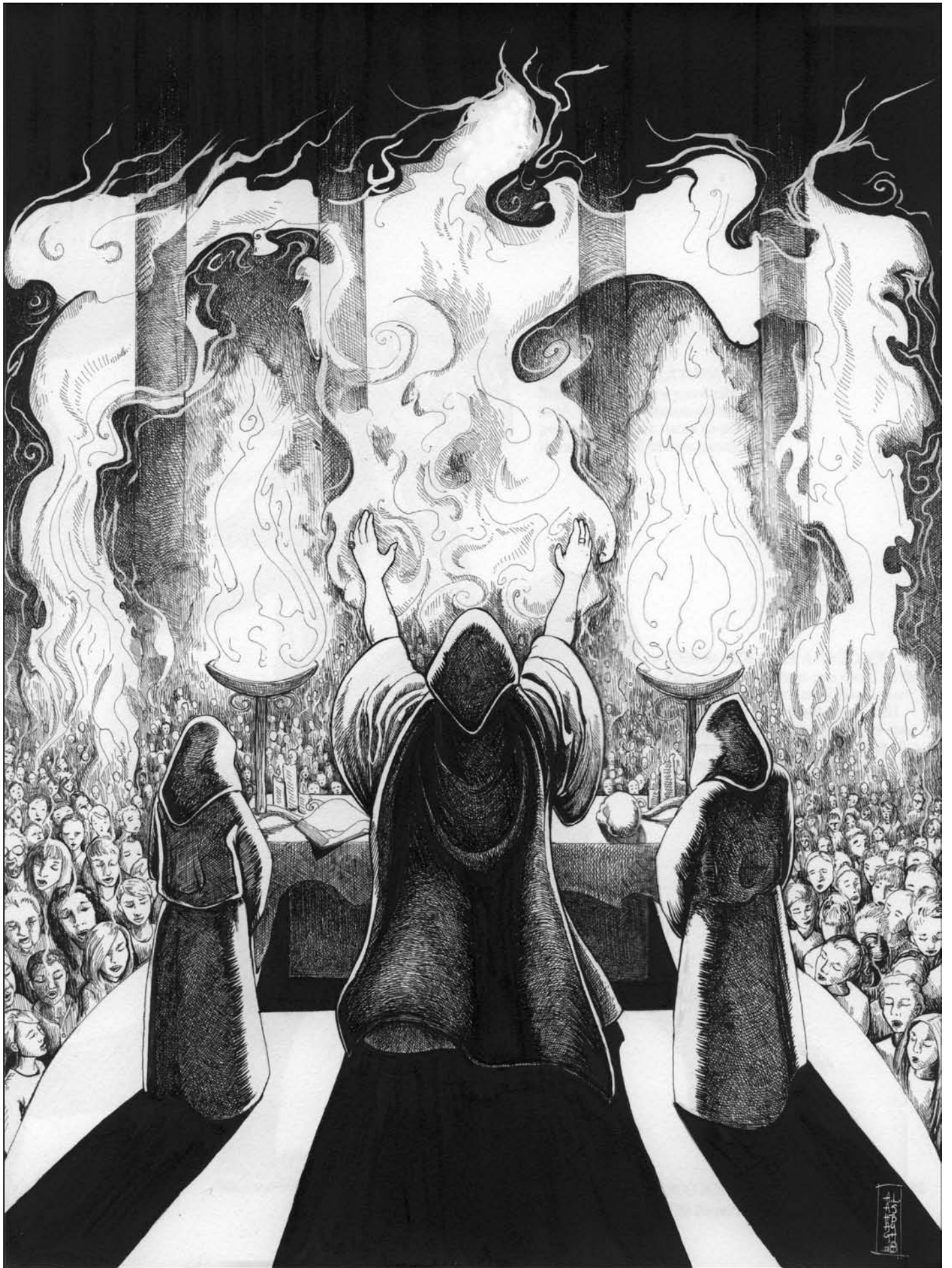
**81-00% The Messiah.** This cult leader either covets power and uses fear to control his followers, or he is a lunatic who genuinely believes he is some sort of savior. Whether a power-monger or lunatic, “Follow me. Trust in me, if you want to live,” is his mantra. Only despite his claims, confidence and charisma, he (or she) has no master plan and is an ordinary person using the situation and desperate people to become important and powerful, if only in the eyes of his desperate followers. This leader paints the world outside his realm of influences as so horrible, deadly and frightening that the followers under his thrall are too scared to leave his cult, and do whatever he tells them.

## Death Cults

### The Zombie Death Cult of Brulyx

When most people talk about “Death Cults,” they are probably talking about the Cult of Brulyx.

Death Cultists worship a little known dark god known as *Brulyx, Lord of the Dead*. The Cult of Brulyx claims they have existed as a secret religion for more than 12,000 years, and have



hidden in the dark corners of society throughout the ages in every civilization of the world. From the days before Atlantis sank to the Egyptians, Romans and modern day, the Cult of Brulyx has waited. Waited for the *day death would reign*. It is all they have ever prayed for, and, if they can be believed, what the cult has secretly tried to bring about for eons. They thought the day of the dead had come when the Black Plague swept across Europe in the Middle Ages, and again in World War I and, especially World War II. However, their prayers were finally answered when the Wave struck. If there was any doubt, it vanished when the dead rose. Their time had come at last.

**Death Priests** claim to know the secrets of the walking dead and take credit for bringing about *the Wave* and the *rise of the dead* in the name of their Lord Brulyx. Whether they caused the Zombie Apocalypse or not is unknown, but it seems unlikely. However, the Cult of Brulyx – more commonly known simply as “the Death Cult” – was prepared for the disaster, and is thriving in the nightmare world of the Zombie Apocalypse. Its priests seem immune to zombies and are left unmolested by every variety of walking dead. Moreover, Death Priests are able to command and control zombies to some significant degree. That means of all the communities, gangs, clans and cults claiming to be able to protect survivors from zombies, Death Priests *really can*.

**All one has to do to join the Death Cult** is swear fidelity to them, participate in mass *every* morning and in special rituals whenever requested, and they are allowed into the cult where they can live safe, productive lives. Actually, membership is a bit more complicated than that, although the Death Priests’ recruitment pitch makes it sound just that easy.

Cultists must carry their own weight, function as productive members of a close-knit community, exhibit loyalty, serve the Death Priest without question, and support the cult in every way. That includes defending the cult community if it is attacked, going into the city to scavenge for food, supplies and other necessities, fight to protect the cult and its leaders, associate with the walking dead, and further the agenda of Brulyx. What, exactly, that agenda might be remains a mystery. For now, the Death Priests ask very little of their flock. They would like it if the members would accept Brulyx as their lord and master, but understand that acceptance and worship comes to everyone at a different pace. Consequently, Death Priests use soft-sales techniques to get survivors to join the cult. They provide shelter, food, clothing, medicine, kindness and protection from zombies. They speak about the wisdom and power of Brulyx, the beauty of death, hint at immortality, and talk about being the leaders (them and the cultists) of a new world where the dead reign and humanity is limited to an elite few, i.e. the members of the Cult of Brulyx. This is all spoken about in vague generalities. When pressed, a Death Priest’s canned response is, “In time, all things will be revealed.” And that time is *not* now.

Frightened and desperate people are willing to do anything to survive. Abandoned, alone and with nowhere else to turn, a Death Cult doesn’t sound so bad. Especially one that seems as benign as the Cult of Brulyx. There aren’t any human sacrifices. They don’t eat babies. The cult really does offer food and shelter, and most importantly, protection from the walking dead. Stay at a Death Priest’s side, and you can go anywhere in a

zombie infested city. The Priests seem like reasonable people and ask so little in return for the safety and peace of mind they provide. So what if you have to pray to some weird deity you’ve never heard of before? (Many cultists convince themselves Brulyx probably isn’t even real.) So what if the Death Priests and a growing number of members actually believe in and worship this Death God? What difference does it make if you have to participate in rituals and masses you don’t understand? It’s all just superstitious mumbo jumbo, right? Of course, you have to pitch in on the day to day chores and work to keep the cult operating and expanding. How can it be a bad thing for you to find other survivors and help them get off the street and find shelter within the cult? You aren’t recruiting worshipers for Brulyx, you are helping people and saving human lives. Its all good, right? That’s how many cultists justify becoming members of a Death Cult. That’s how they live with themselves, and why they don’t ask more questions. They don’t really want to know what the future holds, they are just happy to be alive, safe and relatively happy. Besides, what if Death Cults are the new world order? Isn’t it good to be on the winning side of this transition?

**Brulyx Death Cults have the largest number of followers per cult community**, ranging from 1D6x10+28 (typical) to 1D4x100+32 (large). That’s human followers and worshipers of Brulyx. It does not include the 6D6+36 Slouchers, 1D6+8 Fast Attack Zombies, 2D4 Crawlers, and 1D4+1 Thinkers always present at the cult compound as guardsmen who protect the cult from outsiders. All are completely obedient to the Death Priest and do whatever he (or they, in larger communities) command. Of course, one of the many unspoken questions is, what happens if the Death Priest is injured or killed? Who controls the zombies then? Will they attack the cultists? Actually, the answer is yes. Slay the Death Priest(s) and there is nobody to control the zombies. Without the calming and controlling influence of the Death Priest, the walking dead immediately return to form and start killing cultists. Furthermore, there are usually 1D6x100 other zombies within a five block radius around the cult’s sanctum sanctorum, and they too converge on the cultists when the Death Priest is gone and the moan rings out. Fearing exactly this, most cultists try to protect their Death Priest(s) at all cost, and will sacrifice their own lives for those of the priest(s). Such is the power of fear and desperation of survival.

Even the most naive cultists know something more is going on at the Death Cults. They know Death Priests have Thinkers wrangle and manage the slow, dumber zombies. They don’t like that walking dead are all around them, and though they are told the zombies are present for their own protection, and the cultists *can* come and go without interference, they sometimes feel like they are prisoners in their own community. Death Priest also have the members of their cult sometimes help zombies by sewing heads and limbs back on the dead and they have seen zombies that are quite rotten restored to better physical condition. Some find it disconcerting that many Death Cults (55%) take up residence in abandoned churches, rectories and schools. And since cults are small, intimate communes – open, shared communities – a cult member and his family may have their own room or suite of rooms, but never their own home. There is little privacy.

Most Death Cults are in the heart of the city, where they are an oasis of safety from a sea of walking dead. With no need to

be hidden from zombies or out of their sensing range, churches, schools and school grounds, and low buildings are usually the base of operation, not tall buildings and never skyscrapers.

## Sinister Secrets of Death Cults

The hook to get people to join a Death Cult is that the priests offer what survivors need most: *protection* from the walking dead. The pot is sweetened by the fact that the cult is a community that works together to build a safe environment for all its members. A home among the inheritors of the Earth – the zombie hordes.

Through closely guarded rituals and ceremonies, Death Cult Priests control zombies and prevent them from attacking fellow cultists. If you want to live, especially in the heart of the city, you need to join a cult (or street gang) and do as the Death Priest says. This gives the priest tremendous influence over his cult members and power over the zombies.

**The secret of Zombie Cults** is that every morning the followers pray in a ritual mass in which the people unwittingly, *willingly* release half of their P.P.E. Even if it is only 2-4 points on average, multiple that by 50 or 100 or 300 cultists and it is a considerable amount of life energy. The Death Priest is then able to collect and channel the energy to disseminate it to all the zombies under his control, as well as scores of other zombies in the area. That's why there are always 1D6x100 additional zombies living in the surrounding five block radius around the cult. During these ceremonies, lighting inside is such that the participants cannot see outside; in some cases windows might be covered. If they could, they'd see several hundred walking dead gathered around their cult haven shuffling and softly groaning as they wait for the gift of life released toward the end of the mass. Upon feeding, they shuffle or crawl back into the streets looking for other prey to feed upon, but every morning they are back to be fed by the Death Priest.

The zombies cooperate, serve and protect the priests and cultists because they *feed* them. Stop feeding them for a few days and the zombies become restless, uncooperative and aggressive. Without food the zombies would revert to their savage predatory ways and attack the Death Priest and his followers, but feed them on a regular basis and the zombies become docile, obedient sheep willing to follow simple commands and ready to defend their food source to the death.

The Death Cult Priests use their influence over the zombies to intimidate and coerce human beings to join the cult and do as the priests command, or leave the safety of the cult. The more cultists, the more zombies that can be fed, and the greater the cult's bid for power. However, Death Priests must be careful. If too many zombies start to gather they may be unable to feed them all on a regular basis, and the priest begins to lose control. Lose control and the cult might be attacked and overrun by hungry walking dead. It's a bit tricky to juggle, but most Death Priests manage to do so.

## The New World Order

The Death Priests of Brulyx embrace a new world order where the dead rule the Earth. Thus, part of their agenda is to protect and nurture the walking dead.

**1. The dead must survive.** Just as Brad Ashley surmised, over the course of a generation (20 years or so), human life will

have become so scarce that the walking dead will begin to die off from starvation by the millions. Going dormant helps slow the loss, but half the zombies will perish in about 20 years time, and the majority left will die 20 years after that. (Yes, this is a longer time frame than Brad Ashley would like to believe, but it has the same outcome, and who knows which is correct in their estimation.) Without the walking dead, the Death Cults have no power, so first on their agenda is to establish a way to *feed zombies* without contributing to the loss of human life.

Establishing and increasing the number of Death Cults becomes a critical aspect of their long term plans. In short, the more followers they recruit, the more zombies they can feed and keep alive. The more cults they can establish, the harder their movement will be to crush. Keeping this all secret enables them to grow without intervention from the heroes who might otherwise work harder to destroy them. This is why they keep even their own followers blissfully unaware of the purpose of the daily morning masses. What these frightened people don't know helps the cult and the zombie hordes.

Along those lines, Death Priests and their followers often work to restore zombies who have lost body parts or have been decapitated in battle. Even though there are billions now, the Priests work to keep the zombie population large and healthy.

**2. Converting followers** who join the cult out of desperation and fear into true believers and worshipers of Brulyx is part two of their agenda. True believers serve the Death God out of conviction, not fear or ignorance. True believers would be happy to contribute their life energy to the feeding of the walking dead. Some devotees would become Death Priests themselves to spread the word and establish their own cult communities. Winning the hearts and minds of the people is the only way to assure the dead continue to dominate the planet.

**3. Start where few men dare to tread.** The heart of a city is the chosen location for these cults because its where they potential cultists are most desperate, and because the cult is safe from so-called "heroes" the likes of Hound Masters, Half-Living, Reapers, Soldiers, Shepherds of the Damned and ordinary people with the courage to take a stand. Such champions of the living have a hard time getting to a Death Cult when they must first navigate the outer streets and suburbs of the urban sprawl. Most cannot reach the heart of the city before becoming engaged in a swarm of converging zombies and being forced to retreat. Sprawling urban environments like Baltimore, New Jersey, Houston, Detroit and most of the Midwest are also excellent for Death Cults, because there is so much territory, numerous small cults can be hidden anywhere over a hundred or two hundred square miles of turf to cover. Miles and miles infested by zombies and other dangers.

**4. Eventually, they will pen and breed humans like cattle,** feeding human livestock to zombies, at least in some parts of the world. Rumors about such experiments are already rumored to exist, though the Death Cults have not been directly linked to them and no such food pen has ever been found. Yet.

Of course, members of the Cult of Brulyx will have nothing to fear, for they will become the masters of the living and the dead. That is the *final objective* of the Death Cults: To rule the land of the walking dead through the living, and in so doing, rule over the human race. Or what's left of it.



## Death Priest O.C.C.

### An NPC Villain

Death Priests have surrendered themselves, body and soul, to the teaching of an ancient sect that history has forgotten, and a dark god of the dead known as Brulyx. Somehow, their beliefs, affection for the dead, and ancient arcane knowledge give them some genuine power over the walking dead. They also give their insane plan to rule the world some merit. As strange, sad and demented as it may sound, they are driven to achieve their goal.

Their followers, pawns in a larger bid for power and global domination.

Death Priests may seem benign and even kind now, but it is all an act. In time, as their numbers and power grow, they will become more forceful, aggressive and militant. That may be several years away, but their insidious plan is off to a good start. For now, they are wolves in sheep's clothing, offering the sheep a safe place to live under their wolfish protection.

All Death Priests share in a common ideology of world domination through suppression, murder and manipulation. Consequently, they see valiant heroes like *Apocalyptic Soldiers*, *Hound Masters*, *Shepherds of the Damned*, *Reapers* and *ordinary people* surviving on their own, as dangerous adversaries who need to be exterminated. As for the *Half-Living*, they are regarded as traitors to the cause, because their closeness to "living death" should enlighten them and compel them to join Death Cults, not oppose them or destroy zombies. *Reapers* are hated most, because they teach people how to survive and fight the walking dead, and most of all, they give people *hope*. Without hope, survivors would turn to Death Cults. With hope, they dare to take a stand and believe they can survive and defeat the rule of the dead. Thus, *Reapers* and *Safe Haven Communities* are secretly sought out and targeted for destruction whenever they can. Outright attacks led by a Death Priest or loyal followers NEVER happen. However, they may be responsible for zombie hordes suddenly finding a Safe Haven and laying siege to it, or a Mock Zombie taking up residence and preying on the neighbors, as well as sabotage to vehicles, electrical generators, food supplies, and other misfortune.

### Special O.C.C. Abilities of Death Priests:

**1. Servants of the Dead.** Somehow, the Death Priests' beliefs or association with Brulyx makes all walking dead accept them as their benefactors. This is true even of zombies not fed by the cult. As a result, a Death Priest can walk among any type of zombie without fear of being attacked or harmed. Even during a convergence or battle, zombies never strike at a Death Priest, not even by accident.

Furthermore, everyone in the Death Priest's company (up to 1D6+12 people per level of experience) is also under his protection. Zombies may eyeball them and even reach out for someone, but when the Death Priest shouts "no," "stop," "stay back," "back away," "release them," etc., the zombie immediately complies. To this end, Death Priests sometimes issue cowls or scarves bearing a death's head symbol to be worn around the neck as a designation to dull witted zombies – "Do not touch anyone wearing this item, unless I say otherwise." Of course, zombies are always quick to attack and kill whenever the priest commands it.

**2. Command Zombies.** Death Priests can verbally command zombies to perform simple tasks. Since these servants of the dead understand zombies better than anyone, they know how to make use of the zombies' nature to get what they want done. Thus, **Slouchers** and **Crawlers** are used to stand guard, defend and attack, as well as engage in simple manual labor. **Fast Attack Zombies** and **Flesh Eaters** are sent on seek and destroy or search and locate missions. Flesh-Eating Zombies do not stalk Death Priests and they obey when a priest orders them to do something, especially if it is something easy, like "go away," or

fun, like “kill the man dressed in leather.” **Thinkers** serve as their zombie liaisons and squad leaders, while **Slouchers**, **Crawlers** and **Fast Attackers** obey blindly. **Mock Zombies** may try to avoid Death Cults, but some have been known to serve them as loyal henchmen. This is particularly true when the priest plays along with the insane zombie and pretends that the creature is a “human” suffering from a strange malady. Some Mock Zombies serve Death Cults because they are fed by the Priest and can more easily maintain their pretense of being human because they don’t need to stalk human prey. A cunning Death Priest will make certain this misanthrope gets sufficient P.P.E. to look human, because the more a Mock Zombie can hide its true nature, the happier, more compliant and indebted the fiend behaves and the more likely it is to willingly do anything asked of it by the priest.

### Death Priest, Non-Player Character & Villain

**Note:** This character should NOT be allowed as a player character.

**Also known as** Zombie Priest and Brulyx’s Hand.

**Alignment:** Anarchist (15%), Aberrant (50%), Diabolic (30%), Miscreant (5%).

**Attributes:** I.Q. 2D6+8, M.E. 2D6+6, M.A. 2D6+18, P.S. 2D6+6, P.P. 2D6+3, P.E. 2D6+3, P.B. 2D6+6, Spd 2D6+3.

**Horror Factor:** 12 when facing a threatening Death Priest on his home base of operation, or when he is commanding a group of 5 or more zombies.

**P.P.E.** 3D6+18

**Sex:** A Death Priest may be a male or female.

**O.C.C. Bonuses:** +2 to Perception Rolls and +1D6+8 S.D.C.

**Level of Experience:** 1D6+1 for NPC villains or as desired by the Game Master. Although many Death Priests have worshiped Brulyx and been an active member of a cult for years, the whole Zombie Apocalypse is new to them and they have minimal experience with zombies and empire building.

**Common Skills:** All.

**Other Skills:** As per Occupation.

**Occupations & Skills of Survivors:** In the post-Apocalyptic setting of *Dead Reign*, the occupation is what the character did for a living *before* the Wave struck, the dead rose and civilization collapsed. Even as a *Death Priest* and lifetime cultist, the character had a regular job. His duties to the cult were a well kept secret.

Select or make a random roll to determine the character’s occupation before the Wave. A selection of occupations are described in the **Survivor/Ordinary People O.C.C.** These are the Priest’s skills and occupational background. Of course, most of them probably don’t come into play much since the Wave, because the villain’s job is now that of cult leader.

Plus These Skills:

Art or Photography (+15%)

Dowsing or Holistic Medicine (+10%)

Escape Artist or Seduction (+15%)

Lore: Zombies (+40%)

Philosophy or History (+10%)

Public Speaking (+20%)

**Elective Skills:** As per Occupation.

**Secondary Skills:** As per Occupation.

**Standard Equipment:** 1D4+2 ceremonial robes with hood, traveling clothes for escorting cultists on supply runs (goes along to prevent zombies from attacking them), a small wardrobe of other clothing (may be used for the purpose of travel, disguise and going undercover), boots, jacket, canteens or water skin, pocket knife (1D4 damage), backpack, mirror, wristwatch, walkie-talkie, compass, medium-size flashlight, long-range radio and scanner, notebook or sketch pad, 1D4 pens or markers, 1D4 pencils or a mechanical pencil, and some personal items, including books.

**Tools of the Trade:** Boxes of candles, lanterns/oil lamps, brazers, incense burners, chimes, death symbol (a skull in front of an ornate pattern), skull and skeletal symbols and motifs, and may have tools and odds and ends that relate to the character’s old occupation. Death Priests are often scholarly types, so books and artwork may be among their possessions.

In the cult compound or haven, the priest always wears a hooded robe. Most also wear rings and necklaces to denote their station as leader and priest. Other gear includes jewelry made of bones or skulls, a wood or iron staff, a handgun under the robes as a side arm, a machete also worn on a belt under the robes, and a half suit (vest) of modern body armor is usually worn under the robe.

As the head of a pseudo-secret organization, the Death Priest has access to all resources at the cult’s disposal. This typically includes a handful of vehicles, additional weapons and ammunition, clothing, food, drink, supplies, equipment, and trade goods.

Death Priests always have their own living quarters, away from their followers. It is usually very comfy and quiet, and guarded by 1D4 Crawlers (in the room) plus 1D4+1 Slouchers outside his door. If the priest knows his life is threatened, or has many enemies, he may have twice as many zombies and a Thinker or Mock Zombie among his guards, and/or 2-6 human defenders – loyal and trusted followers.

An altar and place of worship is usually on the ground floor and/or basement, which is why abandoned churches are frequently chosen as the Death Cult’s place of operation or one of the buildings on cult controlled grounds. Many churches have a second small altar and gathering place in their basement, back room or the neighboring rectory.

**Weapons:** One weapon for each W.P. plus 2D6x10+120 extra rounds of ammunition (not all carried on the character’s person).

**Vehicle:** A reliable favorite vehicle, probably a jeep, SUV, or motorcycle and 1D10+10 gallons of extra fuel. Has access to additional vehicles, weapons, spare parts, fuel, and equipment in the cult’s possession.

**Pay:** None, everything is barter and trade. Death Priests live well, though not in opulence.

**Trade Goods:** \$3D6x1,000 worth in trade goods, some may be stashed at various safe places.

# Characters

## Occupational Character Classes

Half-Living  
Hound Master  
Reaper  
Scrounger  
Shepherd of the Damned  
Soldier  
Survivor (“Ordinary People”)

## The Half-Living

### An optional post-Zombie Apocalypse O.C.C.

It’s rare, but there are times when a Survivor or hero gets taken down by zombies, but doesn’t quite die. In game terms, we are talking about that thin line where a character sees his Hit Points reduced to zero, or between zero and his P.E. attribute number below zero. A character lapses into a *coma* when Hit Points reach zero. Zombies sense this and see the character as dead. However, a character can linger on death’s door as long as his Hit Points were not reduced below his P.E. attribute number. If the character has a P.E. of 9 he can survive -9 below zero Hit Points. If he has a P.E. of 24, he can survive -24 points below zero. Hmm, probably shouldn’t use the word “survive” because this character is dead *unless* he gets immediate medical treatment and rolls a successful *save vs coma and death*, two out of three times. This is one of those paramedic resuscitation moments. (“Hand me the paddles, stat!”) **Note:** See the rules section on Hit Points and Recovery of Hit Points for complete details.

Here’s the thing. When a human is in this coma state, while his P.P.E. doesn’t double, it does flare and zombies can permanently steal *half* the character’s existing P.P.E. The comatose character needs to be rescued by his pals or he *will die* in a few hours (one hour per P.E. attribute points or sooner with blood loss). If the victim gets the required medical attention and enjoys a bit of luck (as noted above), he survives this “near death” experience and will recover completely. **HOWEVER**, due to the circumstances of his near death experience at the hands of zombies (this applies *only* when near death came from zombies), the character returns *different*.

He is now one of the **Half-Living**. Body temperature is 69.8 Fahrenheit (21 C), the skin is cold to the touch and pale in color, the eyes have dark circles, and the character’s speed is reduced. He retains his memories, human personality and skills, though skills suffer a bit. He is still considered human, but it’s clear the character is no longer an ordinary human.

### O.C.C. Special Abilities of the Half-Living:

1. Resistant to cold and heat (half damage).
2. Resistant to disease and poison, +4 to save vs both, and symptoms, damage and duration are all half should the character fail to save. Needs only half as much food and rest as he did as



an ordinary human, and can eat raw meat without risk of getting ill.

3. P.S. is *increased* by 50% (e.g. a P.S. of 10 becomes 15).

4. Zombies accept the Half-Living as one of their own and do not attack him unless he attacks them first or tries to take their “food” (human prey), then they retaliate and fight to kill. Consequently, the Half-Living can walk right through a crowd of zombies without being noticed or attacked. Only a Thinker (01-40% chance), Mock Zombie (01-55%) or Death Priest (01-70%) may realize he is not a true zombie and represents a potential threat. Of course, Survivors and zombie hunters may also mistake the character as a walking dead (01-40%), especially from a distance, unless he is in the company of other human beings. The Half-Living retains enough of his *humanity* to be human, but feels insecure about it and *needs* to be with people to believe he is still human; hates being alone for more than an hour. This also makes most Half-Living extremely loyal and protective of their friends.

5. Can pinpoint location of a Zombie Moan after hearing it for only 45 seconds.

6. The Half-Living absorbs P.P.E. from the victims of zombies the same as the walking dead. This occurs automatically whenever the character is within 30 feet (9.1 m) of any human who is killed by zombies, whether he wants the life energy or not. One P.P.E. point from the living restores 1D4 S.D.C. +1 Hit Points to the Half-Living. **Note:** Half-Living do NOT decay or physically deteriorate.

7. Half-Living almost always (98%) hate the walking dead and actively work at destroying them and rescuing survivors.

**O.C.C. Penalties:** A) Attribute changes. Spd attribute is reduced by half, and P.B. is reduced by 30%; the skin is pale.

P.P.E. taken by the zombies is permanently gone (reduced by half).

**B) Lost skills.** Forgets 1D6x10+20% of his Elective and Secondary Skills.

**C) Doesn't like fire.** The character feels uncomfortable around fire and tends to keep away from it.

**D) Needs human association.** Though the character can walk among zombies, he doesn't like to do so for long periods and feels insecure away from his human teammates. That insecurity results in these penalties: -2 on Perception Rolls and initiative, -1 on all combat maneuvers, and -10% on skill performance when away from human companions.

**E) Becomes a zombie when he dies.** -20% to save vs coma and death. When a Half-Living dies by *any means*, he will rise within 1D6+6 minutes as a zombie. As usual, the walking dead has no memory of its past life and instantly wants to feed upon the living. Roll to determine the type of Zombie he becomes: 01-70% Sloucher, 71-80% Fast Attack Zombie, 81-90% Thinker, 91-95% Flesh-Eating Zombie, or 96-00% Mock Zombie. **Note:** Some people fear and distrust Half-Living and treat them like animals, slaves or second-class citizens.

## Half-Living as a Player Character

If a *player character that is a different O.C.C.* has a near death experience at the hands of a zombie(s), as described above, the G.M. *may* allow (or insist) him to become a Half-Living. Apply all the abilities and penalties listed previously to the character and adjust his stats accordingly. If the G.M. doesn't like the idea of a Half-Zombie or doesn't want one as a player character, then he may skip this transformation and the injured character simply recovers.

*If the player character starts out as a Half-Living*, use the following O.C.C. stats to create him. HOWEVER, first check with the Game Master to make certain he will allow such a character.

The Half-Living struggle with the duality of being half human and half . . . *something else*. Something that borders on the sinister and inhuman. They are not dead, nor the walking dead. They do not crave to feed on the living. In fact, if anything, because they almost died and know the fate that awaits them (becoming one of the living dead), they value human life and all the emotions and fragility of life even more than the average survivor. Thus, the Half-Living are loyal to friends, care about other people, and are heroic in their pursuit to save lives and destroy the walking dead. Perhaps because they know many people fear them or look upon them with doubt and suspicion, they strive to be the best humanity has to offer.

**Also known as** Pale-Men and Half-Zombies.

**Alignment:** Any, but typically, Principled (40%), Scrupulous (35%), Unprincipled (15%) or Aberrant (5%).

**Attributes:** I.Q. 2D6+4, M.E. 2D6+3, M.A. 2D6+2, P.S. 2D6+16, P.P. 2D6+3, P.E. 2D6+5, P.B. 2D4+4, Spd 1D6+7.

**Horror Factor:** Not applicable, yet.

**P.P.E.** 1D4+1.

**O.C.C. Bonuses:** Natural A.R. 7, +2D6+6 to S.D.C., +5 to save vs Horror Factor.

**Natural Abilities:** See O.C.C. Special Abilities and Penalties, previously described.

**Occupation:** Doesn't matter what the character was *before* the Zombie Apocalypse, he's a *Half-Living* now. Areas of specialty for this O.C.C. are noted under O.C.C. Skills, below.

**Common Skills:** All; basic.

**O.C.C. Skills of the Half-Living:** Hunts zombies and rescue the living.

Camouflage (+10%)

Climb or Swim (+15%)

Detect Ambush (+5%)

Excavation or Firefighting (+14%)

First Aid (+10%)

General Repair & Maintenance or Dowsing (+10%)

Horsemanship: General or one Transportation skill of choice (+10%).

Hunting or Prowl (+10%)

Land Navigation (+12%)

Meditation or Philosophy (+10%)

Radio: Basic (+10%)

Recognize Weapon Quality (+5%)

Rope Works (+10%)

Tracking (people & zombies; +10%)

Wilderness Survival (+10%)

W.P. Ancient: Two of choice.

W.P. Modern: Shotgun and one of choice.

Hand to Hand: Expert, can be changed to Martial Arts at the cost of one O.C.C. skill.

**Elective Skills:** None. Whatever skills the character had before are forgotten when he becomes a Half-Living. A fact that is disturbing and annoying to this character.

**Secondary Skills:** Likewise, most Secondary Skills have been forgotten. Select one Secondary Skill from the Secondary Skill List in the Skill Section at levels 1, 4, 8 & 12. These are additional areas of knowledge that do not get any bonuses, other than a possible bonus for a high I.Q. All Secondary Skills start at the base skill level.

**Standard Equipment:** Camouflage clothing, a second set of street clothes, running shoes, a pair of boots, a pair of gloves, a leather jacket, one full suit of Modern Body Armor of choice (see equipment section), rain poncho, 1D4 sheets of camouflage netting (blanket-sized), box cutter (1D4 S.D.C.), survival knife (2D4 S.D.C.), first aid kit, one heavy-duty flashlight, one small flashlight, pocket mirror, 1D4 disposable cigarette lighters, a book of matches, roll of duct tape, set of eating utensils (knife, fork, spoon, drinking cup), binoculars, walkie-talkie, sunglasses, two canteens, backpack, duffle bag, knapsack, food rations (1 week's worth), and some personal items.

**Tools of the Trade:** None, the character is dedicated to being a Half-Living who rescues people and hunts zombies.

**Weapons:** One weapon for each W.P. plus a large crowbar (2D6 damage) and each modern weapon has 1D6x10+80 extra rounds of ammunition.



**Vehicle:** A sturdy bicycle and a horse or vehicle that relates to his Transportation skill. If a member of a Safe Haven Community, other vehicles and equipment may be provided as needed for specific assignments. Otherwise, the character must find and acquire his own equipment.

**Pay:** None, everything is barter and trade. Pay in the new, post-apocalyptic world is typically barter; an exchange of goods and services for the goods and services your character needs. The character's acquisition of trade goods (food, fuel, medicine, guns and ammo, etc.) can be the catalyst for numerous adventures.

**Trade Goods:** \$1,000 worth of trade goods, some may be stashed in a safe place.

## Hound Master

### A post-Zombie Apocalypse O.C.C.

In the war against the undead, one of mankind's greatest allies is his "best friend," the dog. Canines have the ability to sense the supernatural, making them invaluable as scouts and guards. They can detect zombies (and people with magic or psionic powers) and are also very useful for hunting, foraging, search and rescue, combat, defense (watchdog) and companionship in these dark and dangerous times.

Hound Masters are people who understand dogs. They are adept at catching and taming wild dogs, as well as breeding, domesticating and training canines. There is nothing supernatural about a Hound Master's abilities, they simply have a deep understanding of canine psychology and affection for the animal. Their skill may not be on the same level as the popular TV personality *Cesar Millan*, but they know how to handle, train and get the most out of their canine companions.

With tens of millions of people turned into the walking dead, just as many dogs went homeless without a master to care for them. Now millions of dogs (and cats) fill the city streets, roam the countryside and run wild. While dogs and other animals cannot be turned into zombies, the undead feed on *all life* and kill any animal they corner and get their hands on. Countless pets have fallen victim to the walking dead, especially as the number of human beings falls to numbers insufficient to feed them all. Injured and starving animals and pregnant females and newborn pups are the most vulnerable to zombie attacks.

What began as an effort to rescue and rehabilitate homeless canines has become a profession that helps both human survivors and the animals. A Hound Master is a man or woman, teenager or adult, skilled as a tracker and in the care and training of canines. Most are also savvy survivors and capable fighters in their own right who dare to venture into abandoned cities and towns to save lives – human and canine. Nearly all survivor communities have at least a half dozen Hound Masters working from a mobile animal hospital or veterinary hospital and dog training camp.

Hound Masters are usually companioned by at least one or two completely loyal and well-trained dog companions of their own. Many more canines may be back at their safe house, camp or training facility (probably the latter if part of a Safe Haven Community). When going out to rescue stray dogs or people in

trouble, a Hound Master takes one or two of their loyal dogs, as well as one or two younger or rehabilitated dogs for "in the field training." The bond between Hound Master and his dog(s) is strong, and most of the animals will fight to the death to protect their master or an innocent person, especially children. That's only fair, as a Hound Master is usually willing to risk his own neck to protect his canine companions. However, these men and women are pragmatic survivors and will not risk the lives of other people to rescue a dog, even his favorite.

**The focus of their work is rescuing and rehabilitating dogs.** This indirectly saves human lives because many of the strays running wild are not just homeless pets, but feral dogs that turned into vicious, wild animals that hunt in packs like wolves. The urban streets have become home to these feral killers, and human beings are regarded as easy prey. Hound Masters put down the man-eating canines they know are beyond saving, and rescue the strays that can be nurtured and retrained to help people.

**Homeless stray dogs** wander, explore and live off the land as best they can. At this point, most are frightened of strangers and back down to people, running away if threatened. Many of these poor animals are easy to coax, comfort and re-domesticate. The animals are happy to united with nice people to adopt them. Food, tender loving care and strong leadership make these animals happy, productive watchdogs, attack animals and companions.

**Wild dogs**, by comparison, have no use for people. People are rivals, enemies and *food* to be hunted, killed and eaten. Like wolf packs, wild dogs are scavengers, carrion eaters and hunters preying upon the young, weak, sick, injured, and elderly. They also eat food scraps, garbage and dead, rotting corpses. *A small wild dog pack* is 2D6+6 canines. *A medium wild dog pack* is 3D6+12 canines. *A large wild dog pack* is 6D6+36 canines. Hound Masters recognize the danger these feral dog packs represent and use their skills to distinguish such packs from packs of harmless strays (the packs they run in are usually half the size of wild dogs), terminate the wild dogs, and try to rescue the strays. In this capacity, most Hound Masters have become good with a rifle, know how to use traps, and have medical skills to put an animal down mercifully.

**Rescued dogs** are either given to people who can give the canines a good home or traded away for food and supplies needed to continue their mission of rescuing canines and saving lives. Veterinary medicine, dog food and other necessities are all accepted as fair trade, along with supplies and medicine needed by humans.

### O.C.C. Special Abilities:

**1. Animal Behavior/Dog Empathy:** The Hound Master understands animal behavior and uses his own body language, movement, vocal tones, calm, confident demeanor and other techniques to calm, control, rescue and tame homeless/masterless dogs running wild in the streets. Most canines see a Hound Master as their strong and fearless leader and cheerfully obey and follow his commands. This also makes them eager to learn and please him or their new master.

Against killer feral dogs and dog packs, the Hound Master knows how to show no fear as well as how to make a wild dog pack stop and *reconsider* attacking him or the people accompa-

nying him. In short, the wild animals see him as a dangerous, rival *Alpha Male* and are likely (see Base Skill) to back off from him rather than attack. -10% to the skill roll if the Hound Master is obviously hurt or bleeding, and -10% if any of his companions are crying or exhibiting fear. If someone in his group turns and runs away, 1D6x10% of the wild dog pack will chase and attack that individual. The rest of the pack will attack 1D4 other people in his group, one of which will be the Hound Master and the one attacking him is probably the pack leader. Killing the pack leader will send the pack into a state of disarray, sending the other animals fleeing even if they outnumber the people ten to one.

Understanding animal behavior is also effective with other types of animals, particularly domesticated ones, but since dogs are the character's area of specialty, he suffers a penalty of -15% when dealing with animals other than canines. **Base Skill:** 58% +4% per level of experience.

**2. Dog First Aid:** A rudimentary veterinary skill that focuses exclusively on canines. It enables the Hound Master to diagnose and treat simple canine illnesses and injuries, including cleaning and stitching up wounds, setting bones and making a splint for a fractured leg, the use of basic medicine for dogs, and general care for dogs. **Base Skill:** 45% +5% per level of experience. **Note:** If the player selects Veterinary Science as an *Elective Skill*, he is an all-around animal doctor who specializes in the treatment of dogs (+15% bonus to Dog First Aid and all treatment of canines).

**3. Train Dogs:** The Hound Master knows the proper techniques and methods of training canines. The process takes time (at least 1D4+2 months) and requires repeated skill checks on a regular basis. The better the skill check results, the faster the dog becomes obedient, loyal and trained. **Base Skill:** 50% +5% per level of experience.

**Areas of Special Training:** A canine can be trained in any ONE of the following areas. Often limited to select breeds of bigger and smarter dogs.

a) **Search and Rescue:** The dog is trained to track and locate people by scent. Ideal in searching for people who get lost, survivors in the cities, and people taken captive and hidden away or chained up by cultists, criminals or Retro-Savages. Specifically trained to find the living. **Base Skill:** 60% (+20% for Bloodhound, Beagles and other breeds of dog with superior sense of smell and tracking). Follows orders well.

b) **Explosive Ordnance Trackers:** The dog is trained to recognize and track down explosives, land mines, and gunpowder. **Base Skill:** 60% (+15% to German Shepherds, Labrador Retrievers and other intelligent dogs).

c) **Attack Guard Animals:** Canines trained to patrol and guard a particular area or person. The animal barks and howls when someone it does not know comes within view and the barking gets more agitated and fierce as the intruder gets closer. Will attack any intruder who comes within its assigned perimeter (past a particular fence, etc.). Also trained to attack on command and will attack zombies. German Shepherds, Wolfhounds, Pit Bulls, Dobermans, Boxers, and many other breeds make excellent guard and attack dogs. **Combat Bonuses:** +1 on initiative, +1 to strike, +3 to disarm, +4 to entangle, +2 to damage and +3 to

save vs Horror Factor. These are in addition to other bonuses natural to the canine.

d) **Watchdogs:** The more common watchdog may be any breed of small to large dog that serves as both companion and living alarm. They bark at approaching intruders and get more ferocious and agitated the closer the intruder gets. However, unlike attack dogs, the animal is not likely to attack, though it will snap at and threaten to bite, unless it or its master is attacked (in which case 01-90% likelihood of attacking).

e) **Herd Dogs:** Trained to gather and keep livestock (typically sheep, goats, and cattle) together and will help with herding and corralling them. Will also bark and howl when a dangerous predator is stalking livestock or territory (the home or farm) the dog considers his to protect. The dog is likely (01-80%) to protect its master(s) when threatened and (01-50%) when livestock is threatened. **Combat Bonuses:** +1 to dodge, +2 to entangle and +2 to save vs Horror Factor. These are in addition to other bonuses natural to the canine.

f) **Hunting Dogs:** Trained to recognize and track the scent of game animals (rabbit, squirrel, raccoon, possum, quail, duck, goose, pheasant, deer, etc.), get relatively close, stand alert and point in the animal's direction. May also be trained to retrieve small game animals after being shot, such as ducks. Not usually trained to attack because the dog is likely to get injured, but a hunting dog is likely (01-80%) to protect its master if he is threatened. Limited to Labradors, Spaniels, Setters and Retrievers.

g) **Obedient Pets and Companions:** Obeys simple, direct commands (stay, sit, fetch, come, no, go, attack, etc.) from its master(s) even when instincts urge otherwise. Also playful and



gets along with other canines and humans. The dog is likely (01-60%) to protect its master(s) if he is threatened.

**h) Zombie Hunters:** A strange take on cadaver dogs. Can sense zombies as supernatural beings up to 500 feet (152 m) away (half for untrained dogs). Can smell the stench of the dead up to 3,000 feet (914 m) away, double in warm conditions (65 degrees Fahrenheit/18 C or warmer), and triple if there are 100 or more zombies clustered together as a group (half for untrained dogs). **Base Skill:** Can follow a specific, or the most recent, zombie scent at 78% proficiency (+10% to Bloodhounds and German Shepherds). Can also be used to search for dead bodies in collapsed buildings, shallow graves, etc. (-10%). **Combat Bonuses:** +2 to dodge, +3 to entangle against humans, +6 to entangle zombies, and +4 to save vs Horror Factor.

## Hound Master O.C.C.

**Also known as** Dog Rescuer, Dog Trainer and Dog Breeder.

**Alignment:** Any, but leans toward good.

**Attribute Requirements:** M.E. 10 and M.A. 13.

**O.C.C. Bonuses:** +2D6+4 S.D.C., +1 to Perception Rolls, +1 to roll with impact, and +2 to save vs Horror Factor.

**Occupation:** Doesn't matter what the character was *before* the Zombie Apocalypse, he's a *Hound Master* now. His areas of specialty for this O.C.C. are noted above and under O.C.C. Skills, below.

**Common Skills:** All; highly skilled.

### O.C.C. Skills of the Hound Master:

Animal Husbandry (+15%)

Breed Dogs (+25%)

Brewing (+10%)

Brewing: Medicinal (+10%)

Climb (+10%)

Herding (+10%)

Horsemanship: General or one Transportation Skill of choice (+5%).

Hunting

Land Navigation (+10%)

Prowl (+10%)

Running

Swim (+5%)

Track & Trap Animals (+20%)

Veterinary Science (+5%) or Wilderness Survival (+10%)

W.P. Ancient: Two of choice; typically Blunt or Knife.

W.P.: Rifle

W.P. Modern: one of choice.

Hand to Hand: Basic, which can be changed to Expert at the cost of one Elective Skill, or to Martial Arts at the cost of two Elective Skills.

**Elective Skills:** May select all of the Occupational Skills listed under the *Medical: Veterinarian Occupation* or select eight from the standard available Elective Skill categories. The latter may reflect the character's occupation and life before the Zombie Apocalypse.

**Secondary Skills:** Select two Secondary Skills from the Secondary Skill List in the Skills section at levels 1, 3, 7, 11 &

15. These are additional areas of knowledge that do not get any bonuses, other than a possible bonus for a high I.Q. All Secondary Skills start at the base skill level.

**Dog Companion:** The Hound Master has one fully-trained dog of his own, his "best friend" and traveling companion, at level one, and may (at the player's option) add another one at levels 3, 6, 9 and 12. The bond between man and dog(s) is strong, and both human and canine are extremely loyal to each other. Most Hound Masters favor large and powerful breeds, such as German Shepherds and other Shepherd breeds, Wolfhounds, Elkhounds, Saint Bernards, Newfoundlands, Labrador Retrievers, Collies, Huskies, Rottweilers, Mastiffs, Bloodhounds, Dobermans, Boxers, Pit Bulls, and similar. If dog companion is killed the character is likely to replace it as quickly as possible.

**Standard Equipment:** Traveling clothes, a second set of street clothes, running shoes, a pair of boots, a pair of gloves, a leather jacket, one full suit of *light* Modern Body Armor of choice (see equipment section), rain poncho, 1D4 sheets of camouflage netting (blanket-sized), box cutter (1D4 S.D.C.), survival knife (2D4 S.D.C.), first aid kit (for humans), one heavy-duty flashlight, one small flashlight, pocket mirror, a disposable cigarette lighter, a box of wooden matches, roll of duct tape, set of eating utensils (knife, fork, spoon, drinking cup), binoculars, walkie-talkie, sunglasses, two canteens, backpack, duffle bag, knapsack, food rations (1 week's worth), and some personal items.

**Tools of the Trade:** 1D4 extra (dog-size) blankets, 1D4 large sacks, 1D4 medium sacks, 1D6+6 animal snares, 1D4 medium-sized animal cages, one large animal cage, 1D6+8 dog collars, 1D6+6 dog leashes, 1D4+1 adjustable dog muzzles, a dog whistle, flea powder, two dozen flea collars, a box of dog treats, a big bag of dry dog food for every two large dogs he has (one bag can feed two large canines for a month), first aid kit for canines, and basic dog care items (hair brush, nail clippers, water bowl, dog bed, shampoo, etc.).

**Weapons:** One weapon for each W.P. plus a large crowbar (2D6 damage) and/or a wooden staff, and each modern weapon has 6D6+60 extra rounds of ammunition.

**Vehicle:** None to start except for a sturdy bicycle. If a member of a Safe Haven Community other vehicles and equipment may be provided. Otherwise, the character must find and acquire his own equipment.

**Pay:** None, everything is barter and trade. Pay in the new, post-apocalyptic world is typically barter; an exchange of goods and services for the goods and services your character needs. The character's acquisition of trade goods (food, fuel, medicine, guns and ammo, etc.) can be the catalyst for numerous adventures.

**Trade Goods:** \$1D6x1,000 worth of trade goods. This doesn't include trained dogs, which are a valuable commodity. However, most Hound Masters are very selective when it comes to giving away or selling their dogs.

## Canine Stats & Combat Notes:

Canines have an instinctual hatred of the undead and unless they are well trained to remain calm, they will whine, growl, and bark uncontrollably in the vicinity of the undead. Can sense

zombies as supernatural beings up to 250 feet (76 m) away, can smell the stench of the dead up to 1,500 feet (457 m) away, double in warm conditions (65 degrees Fahrenheit/18 C or warmer), and double that range when there are 100 or more zombies clustered together as a group.

The following are general, all-purpose stats that will serve for most breeds and sizes.

Alignment: Well trained and behaved dogs are considered Principled or Scrupulous. Misbehaving dogs are Anarchist. Feral/killer wild dogs are Miscreant.

Attributes: Vary. Most are fast, strong and personable.

Average Speed: 30-35 mph (48 to 56) for most canines, the fastest are 40-45 mph (64 to 72 km), and all can run 30% faster for a short burst lasting 1D4 minutes. Dogs are built for extended periods of running, although not as long as horses. All canines can maintain their average speed (the lower number) for up to four hours with minimal exhaustion. A burst of faster speed can only be maintained for a short period and can only be performed once every 20 minutes.

Typical Hit Points: 2D6+4 (double for large animals).

Typical S.D.C.: 2D6+8 (double for large animals).

Average Life Span: 12-18 years (1D4 less for large breeds).

P.P.E.: 4D6

Natural Abilities (Common): Nightvision 100 feet (30.5 m), Prowl 45%, track by smell 60% (+20% for breeds known to have exceptional tracking/olfactory abilities), swim 65%, leap 4 feet (1.2 m) high and 6 feet (1.8 m) across, and see *Special Attacks*.

Dog Bite Damage: Small Dog: 1D4. Medium: 1D6. Large: 2D4. Very Large and/or Powerful (Pit Bull, Mastiff, Wolfhound, Saint Bernard): 1D10 damage.

Typical Canine Bonuses: +2 on initiative, +2 strike, +3 dodge, +1 to entangle, and +2 to save versus Horror Factor.

Attacks per Melee: Three.

Special Attacks: 1. *Pouncing, Leaping & Knockdown Attacks.* Dogs instinctively leap and bite at their prey. A pouncing leap from a *medium-sized canine* (25 to 40 pounds/11 to 18 kg) has a 01-33% chance of knocking an individual down. A pouncing leap from a *large canine* (50-80 pounds/22.5 to 36 kg) has a 01-50% chance of knocking an individual down; and the largest breeds (90+ lbs/40.5 kg) have a 01-70% chance of knocking an individual down! All breeds are +10% to knock down a Sloucher or Pattern Zombie. Victims knocked down lose initiative and two melee attacks and the dog is on top of them, growling and holding them down (must fight to get the animal off) or biting if the dog presses the attack. A trained attack or zombie hunting dog will also attack with biting, or leap from one zombie to another to keep them off balance until its master joins the fight or gets away.

2. *Grabbing Bite and Entangle Attack.* A grappling or entanglement attack, the canine typically grabs hold of a sleeve (or pant leg) in its mouth, refuses to let go and pulls, jerks and tussles hard to keep the victim off balance and unable to run/flee/attack. The victim's combat bonuses are reduced by half, he loses initiative and cannot run because he is dragging a dog that is fighting to resist him and hold him in place! Likewise, the victim performs skills with great difficulty, -40% skill

penalty while the dog is yanking and shaking his captive, as well as growling menacingly the entire time. The dog can hold its grip for several minutes (1D6+6) without having to readjust its bite/grip. Just think about how tenacious your dog is when you play tug of war with your pet, same basic idea. A trained attack or zombie hunting dog will not try to bite, but continues to hold/entangle, usually long enough for its master to either join the fight or make good his escape.

Value of the Canine: \$40-\$240 for simple mixed breed companion or watchdog, \$500-\$1,000 as a highly trained canine and/or purebred breed.

## Reaper

### A post-Zombie Apocalypse O.C.C.

*"Memento Mori"*

"Remember that you are mortal," the Reapers' motto.

Reapers are zombie-killers. Be it in hand to hand combat or by long-range attacks, Reapers know how to get the job done. Some of them see it as their duty or mission in life. Others see themselves as heroes of humanity. Many hunt and kill zombies out of revenge – everyone has lost loved ones, friends and associates to the Creeping Doom. Still others hunt them for sport or because it gives them a strange sense of empowerment. Whatever the reason, Reapers are among the most dedicated and experienced zombie slayers and are a valuable asset to any group of survivors.

The origin of the "Reaper" label for *dedicated zombie killers* goes back to the members of a motorcycle club from the Chicago area known as the Reapers. A large group of them were on a road-trip through Wisconsin when the Wave struck. They managed to stick together and survive the ensuing chaos. This was possible, in part, to their shared fondness for martial arts, firearms, and hunting, and the Reapers' strong sense of camaraderie. Each club member considered their buddy to be family, and family sticks together in crisis. When the dead rose to attack the living, the Reapers stuck together, watched each other's backs, and battled their way home. Back to Chicago in search for loved ones. As a result, they played a key role in the Battle of Chicago. Their valiant heroics in that battle won the Reapers great notoriety and respect, but they could not save Chicago.

Since then, stories of the Reapers' heroics and commitment to destroying the zombie plague across North America have become legendary. Likewise, bands of the original Reapers have scattered across the country teaching others *the Way of the Reaper* and the art of zombie hunting. The leader, Brad Ashley, has even written and mass produced the *Reaper's Survival Guide* to help others survive. As a result, many warriors who have become dedicated destroyers of zombies have proudly taken up the name, **Reaper**.

Reapers, be they members of the original club or those who have followed their noble example, roam the land like knights of old, destroying zombies wherever they are found (as best they can) and aiding other survivors. People who take the Reaper name are dead serious about killing zombies and dedicated to riding the road in the quest to help others, which makes them very much knights on motorcycles.



The Reapers' numbers have swollen, since there are always plenty of survivors eager to join their crusade. New recruits are called "Prospects" and must prove themselves before they earn the right to call themselves a Reaper. The training is very hands-on, since there is very little respite from the zombie hordes, and most training involves real field combat and fly-by-the-seat-of-your-pants engagements with the walking dead. Consequently, the mortality rate for "Prospects" is high, with only one in five living long enough to earn the title *Reaper* (which starts at level one experience). Those who don't die in combat may give up the quest to be a Reaper when they realize this is no game, but a life and death war against the undead monsters.

Reapers are often encountered in groups typically called Reaper "legions" or "packs." *Packs* tend to vary in size from a half dozen to two or three dozen, while a *legion* is usually 60-150 (3D4x10+30) members, half of whom are Prospects. However, a group of any size may call itself a pack or legion as it deems fit. Alternately, a lone Reaper, a pair of Reapers, or a Reaper and 1-3 Prospects under his (or her) wing can be found among mixed groups of heroes and survivors fighting the zombie hordes or keeping people safe from the undead.

All Reapers are driven (some would say obsessed) with hunting, battling and destroying zombies. As a result, they are experts in all things involving zombies, particularly the methods of

tricking, trapping, and killing them, as well as escaping them. Reapers have become expert at hit and run tactics, fast moving raids, and inflicting massive amounts of damage fast, before beating it out of the zombie attack zone. To this end, they have found motorcycles, dirt bikes and similar small, fast vehicles as their choice of transportation. Reapers may have a convoy of trucks and other vehicles, but they are always left 30-80 miles (48 to 128 km) away from the point of battle chosen by the gang.

**O.C.C. Special Reaper Skills:** All Reapers have the following skills, only a few other O.C.C.s can take these skills without benefit of the Reaper bonus listed.

**1. Motorcycle Combat:** The motorcycle pilot has extensive experience riding in combat situations where attention must be split between combat and normal riding. This training allows the pilot to engage in high speed maneuvering, stunt riding, and extreme off-road where normal vehicles could not go. The pilot is considered an expert rider and is capable of reliably performing actions on a motorcycle that others would never be able to consider. The pilot knows how to use his body to steer the bike by shifting weight or use of the forearm, and can perform this with equal skill as hands on the bars. **No penalty** to strike with a firearm or melee weapon while riding a motorcycle. However, only one-handed weapons can be used, shotguns, rifles and two-handed melee weapons all suffer a -2 to strike and inflict a -10%

to piloting skill checks. Pilot must have both hands on the bike to perform *any* maneuvers where a wheel leaves the ground, otherwise suffers a -30% piloting check penalty.

**2. Motorcycle Mechanics.** This covers the advanced understanding of motorcycle repair, design and modification. With this skill, a bike mechanic can adjust the rake/trail, suspension, engine performance or accessories of almost any motorcycle. This training encompasses advanced engine theory of both 2 stroke and 4 stroke engines as well as intake, ignition and exhaust. Under extreme situations, the mechanic can adapt parts from different motorcycles or even fabricate parts to make repairs. A side effect of this training is the mechanic has a 75% chance to identify a motorcycle by sight (or the components it is made up from). **Base Skill:** 40% +4% per level, +12% for Reapers.

**3. Lore: Death Cults.** Rumors, speculation and what little is generally known about Death Cults, their priests, their followers, their rituals, purpose and goals for the future. Characters with this skill always want to learn more about Death Cults. Includes a basic knowledge about Retro-Savages as well, though strictly speaking, they are not a Death Cult. **Base Skill:** 16% +4% per level of experience; +20% for Reapers.

**4. Lore: Zombies.** Everything there is to know about zombies – their abilities, behavior, strengths and weaknesses, and the best ways to fight and destroy them. **Base Skill:** 30% +5% per level of experience for the average Joe, +30% for Reapers.

## Reaper Tactics & Info

**Reaper Killing Run.** First, a lone Reaper, pair or small squad (4-8 people) scout out the target area. They plot the best ways in and several escape routes out. Then the bikers pick a place to hit, a time to do it, and ride in from a distance and attack. The battle is usually short, under eight minutes, and deadly. If the Reaper Legion can get away with few injuries or casualties, they are likely to zip away, regroup and either attack again a short while later, or hit another target or two in the same general area. If the zombies are slow to respond, Reapers will hang around to take down as many as possible, retreating only when the number of zombies becomes truly frightening and escape increasingly dangerous. These zombie killers may be dedicated and insanely courageous, but they are not suicidal.

Likewise, they may retreat slowly, killing individual zombies and small groups they encounter on their way out of town.

The trick to these killing raids is to have several well planned exit strategies and escape routes. As swarming creatures, zombies gather toward the sound of combat, the cries of their brethren and the scent of the living. As they emerge from their hiding places they inevitably create closing rings of zombies that tighten as they head toward the conflict. Many a scavenger and hero has lost their life (or worse, become one of the living dead) when their escape route was cut off and they were overcome by swarms of zombies.

**Silent Death Run.** Not all attacks are fast and loud. Reapers, especially a lone hunter, sniper and small packs, may also sneak into an area and *quietly dispatch* their hated enemy one by one. Clearing out “nests” – as they call them – one barn, house, parking garage and office building at a time. The goal is to kill as

many zombies as possible before they catch on to what’s going on.

One method of quietly killing zombies is to get them while dormant or before the creature can unleash its bellowing moan that alerts other walking dead to the presence of humans. Machetes, swords, homemade battle axes, and other bladed melee weapons that can take off a zombie’s head are used in these silent death runs. Maces and bludgeons can work too, but it usually requires 3-6 hammering blows to the head to smash its brains or knock the head off, and 2-4 chops with a blade weapon to take off the head. Bows and arrows, crossbows, fire and other means may also be used in silent death runs.

Such silent death runs may start out covert, but can end with a bang. If the opportunity arises to kill a large number of zombies en masse, Reapers take it. This usually involves hand grenades, other types of explosives, rings of fire to consume the walking dead, and plenty of gunfire.

**Killing Zombies is the Goal.** It is important to understand that unlike Soldiers and other rescuers, the primary goal of all Reapers is to *destroy zombies*, not rescue innocent people. Sure, they’ll help other heroes, and yes, Reapers are famous for rescuing people, however, that is usually the secondary result of their zombie killing sprees. For example, if a woman and child run out from their hiding place during a raid, the Reapers will try to rescue them and carry them off to safety, but only *after* the heroes have finished their assault on the zombies. Similarly, a *Reaper Legion* is happy to use a killing run to draw the attention of the zombie hordes in an effort to help other heroes accomplish some other task or mission. Likewise, Reapers are quick to volunteer to hold a defensive line in an attempt to kill as many zombies as possible, while others work at saving lives, getting supplies, etc.

**Mercy Killing of a Comrade in Arms.** For a Reaper, becoming one of the walking dead is a fate worse than death. They refuse to allow themselves or a comrade to become a zombie. As a result, most will blow their own head off if death by zombies is a certainty. Likewise, a Reaper who cannot rescue a comrade from being pulled into a zombie swarm will try to kill his friend before the person is slain so he cannot rise again as one of the Creeping Doom.

**Reaper Women.** Like most biker communities, women are generally considered *equals* to the male members. If they can ride, use a weapon, want to kill zombies and save lives, and can handle themselves in a fight, they can become Reapers! Forty percent of all Reapers are female.

**It is Heart That Matters, Not Age.** Likewise, nearly one quarter of Reapers are 17-22 years of age, and 12% are 50 years and older.

**Brad Ashley** is the charismatic leader and gifted strategist of the Reapers. He saw his Reaper family through the Wave and the Battle of Chicago, and saved tens of thousands of survivors along the way. His goal is for him and his crew to help teach others how to survive and fight so the human race has a chance of surviving the Zombie Apocalypse. This is not a pipedream to Brad.

As he sees it, the walking dead rot and decay, and *will*, eventually, all (or most) perish. It may take 5-15 years, but it should happen. As they begin to die off in large batches, years from

now, the zombie problem will become more manageable and the tide will turn for humans. The trick is rescuing those in need *now*, and keeping people alive until *later*. Meanwhile, destroying zombies now is good for morale, helps survivors establish Safe Haven Communities (sanctuaries for the living), helps them keep their edge, and trains a growing army of survivors how to fight the walking dead. This outlook for the future is also what makes Brad so worried about *Death Cults*. For his plan to work, there cannot be caretakers who protect and nurture zombies. The Death Cults must go.

## Reaper O.C.C.

**Also known as** Zombie Killers, Zombie Slayers and Biker Knights.

**Alignment:** Any, but most are Principled (25%), Scrupulous (40%), Unprincipled (20%), and Anarchist (10%).

**Attribute Requirements:** P.S. 12 and the spirit of a hero.

**Occupation:** Doesn't matter what the character was *before* the Zombie Apocalypse, he's a *Reaper* now. His areas of specialty for this O.C.C. are noted above and under O.C.C. Skills, below.

**O.C.C. Bonuses:** 2D6+8 S.D.C., +1D4 to P.S., +1 to P.P. and P.E. attributes, and +4 save vs Horror Factor.

**Bonuses vs Zombies:** +1 attack per melee round, +1 on initiative and +1 to strike, parry and dodge, and +1 to "Called Shots." Applies only when fighting zombies!

**Common Skills:** All; basic.

**O.C.C. Skills of the Reaper:** In addition to the four O.C.C. skills described previously (Lore: Death Cults, Lore: Zombies, Motorcycle Combat, Motorcycle Mechanics):

Athletics (General)

Combat Driving

Detect Ambush (+10%)

Intelligence (+10%)

Radio: Basic (+5%)

Tailing (+10%)

Transportation: Motorcycle (+16%)

Transportation: One skill of choice (+10%).

Wilderness Survival (+5%)

W.P. Archery or Targeting, pick one.

W.P. Ancient: One of choice (typically Blunt, Axe or Sword).

W.P. Handguns

W.P. Shotguns

W.P. Modern: One of choice.

Hand to Hand: Expert or Martial Arts, pick one.

**Elective Skills:** Select six from the standard available categories. These skills *may* reflect the character's occupation and life before the Zombie Apocalypse.

**Secondary Skills:** Select two Secondary Skills from the Secondary Skill List in the Skills section at levels 1, 3, 8, 12 & 15. These are additional areas of knowledge that do not get any bonuses, other than a possible bonus for a high I.Q. All Secondary Skills start at the base skill level.

**Standard Equipment:** A suit of riding armor, a suit of modern combat armor of choice (see equipment section), a set of street clothes, running shoes, a pair of steel-toed boots, a pair of leather gloves, a leather jacket, rain poncho (cheap), one sheet of camouflage netting large enough to cover his bike, survival knife (2D4 S.D.C.), first aid kit, one heavy-duty flashlight, one small flashlight, pocket mirror, refillable cigarette lighter, 1D4 books of matches, roll of duct tape, set of eating utensils (knife, fork, spoon, drinking cup), binoculars, walkie-talkie, sunglasses, two canteens, backpack, duffle bag, knapsack, food rations (1 week's worth), and some personal items.

**Tools of the Trade:** The bike, the weapons, ammo and equipment are this character's tools of the trade.

**Weapons:** One weapon for each W.P. plus a large crowbar (2D6 damage), and each modern weapon has 2D6x10+120 extra rounds of ammunition (not all carried on the character's person).

**Vehicle:** A reliable favorite motorcycle, probably an Enduro or Dual Sport Bike, and 1D10+4 gallons of extra fuel. If a member of a Safe Haven Community, other bikes, spare parts, fuel, vehicles and equipment may be provided as needed for specific assignments. Otherwise, the character must find and acquire his own equipment.

**Pay:** None, everything is barter and trade. Pay in the new, post-apocalyptic world is typically barter; an exchange of goods and services for the goods and services your character needs. A Reaper is a zombie exterminator and rescuer of the innocent, that's his stock in trade. However, they'll also do supply runs and whatever it takes to keep operating as a zombie killer. People who appreciate and respect (or fear) Reapers usually give them a 10-40% discount. The character's acquisition of trade goods (food, fuel, medicine, guns and ammo, etc.) can be the catalyst for numerous adventures.

**Trade Goods:** \$1D6x1,000 worth of trade goods, some may be stashed in a safe place.

## Scroungers

### A post-Zombie Apocalypse O.C.C.

A Scrounger is much more than a survivor who scavenges the abandoned cities and towns for supplies to live on or trade. Scroungers are skilled seekers and traders with a practiced eye for what can be used to sell and trade, but also for what can help people. This includes combinations of scrounged items that can be made into something even more useful. To that end, a Scrounger can track down items others find difficult or impossible to find, and they see value in parts and wreckage that can be salvaged, rebuilt, reused, jury-rigged or spliced together to perform a necessary function that the average person would never imagine. Thus, the difference between a common survivor and a Scrounger is that the average Joe searches for an article that fits his needs, the Scrounger finds items he can use to make them fit or surpass his needs. Such a character is a valuable resource to any group of adventurers, survivors, and especially Safe Haven Communities.

These resourceful rogues have a keen sense of what can be cannibalized for parts, rigged and combined to work better or to make two, normally incompatible pieces work together. They also have a nose for finding the best goods. Scroungers are adept at moving through dangerous, zombie-infested areas without drawing attention to themselves, locating valuable trade goods, and retrieving them quickly and efficiently. They are also shrewd bargainers, and always seem to get top value for their goods. The least scrupulous border on being professional thieves.

A Scrounger knows that he cannot carry everything he finds, so he often “stashes” his goods. Sometimes this means simply leaving the goods where they were found, if the location is inaccessible to the average survivor. Most of the time, however, a Scrounger will transport the goods to one of his hidden caches or a hiding place only he knows about, committing the location of these “treasure troves” to memory. Seldom does a Scrounger draw a map or commit the locations to writing.

### Scrounger O.C.C.

**Also known as** Street Runners and Rogue Traders.

**Attribute Requirements:** I.Q. and P.P. of 10 or higher.

**Alignment:** Any, but typically lean toward Scrupulous (20%), Unprincipled (35%) and Anarchist (30%).

**O.C.C. Bonuses:** +1D4 to M.A., +1 to P.P., +2D6 S.D.C., +2 to Perception Rolls and +2 to save vs HorrorFactor.

**Common Skills:** All, +10%, highly skilled.

#### O.C.C. Skills

Appraise Goods (+20%)

Barter (+16%)

Basic Mechanics (+20%)

Basic Electronics (+15%)

Camouflage (+15%)

Climb (+10%)

Concealment (+20%)

Escape Artist (+15%)

Find Contraband (+20%)

General Repair and Maintenance (+15%)

Jury-Rig (+10%)

Land Navigation (+12%)

Pick Locks (+10%) or Safe-Cracking (+5%).

Palming (+15%)

Prowl (+10%)

Recognize Weapon Quality (+15%)

Recycle (+20%)

Rope Works (+15%)

Salvage (+20%)

Transportation: One of choice.

W.P.: One Ancient and two Modern of choice.

Hand to Hand: Basic only.

**Elective Skills:** Select three skills from the Rogue or Wilderness Category and two from the Technical or Transportation skill category at first level. Select one new skill at levels 3, 6, 9, 12, and 15 from any available Elective Skill category. All new skills start at level one proficiency.

**Secondary Skills:** Select two Secondary Skills from the Secondary Skill List in the Skills section at levels 1, 4, 9 & 15. These are additional areas of knowledge that do not get any





bonuses, other than possible bonus for a high I.Q. All Secondary Skills start at the base skill level.

**Starting Equipment:** Scrounging clothes (pants with big pockets, many pockets, zipper pockets, leather jacket with armor plates (ceramic, plastic or metal) on the forearms, elbow and shoulders (A.R. 11, 40 S.D.C.), plus protective helmet, personal clothes, rain poncho, steel-toed boots, pocket-sized lock picking kit, S.W.A.T. Entry Tool, portable tool kit (containing sockets, screwdrivers, hammer, wire cutter, and other hand tools), bolt cutter, heavy-duty flashlight, penlight, 30 feet (9.1 m) of strong rope, box of chalk, can of white or bright colored spray paint, survival knife, canteen, dried food rations (two weeks worth), lighter, 1D4 books of matches, 1D4 backpacks, duffle bag, 1D4+3 medium sacks, 1D4+1 large sacks, box of 50 gallon-size Zip Lock plastic bags, 2D4 plastic specimen containers of varying size, 1D4x10 pairs of plastic surgical gloves, Telephone Book (Business Directory), 1D4+1 maps of the local area, and some personal items.

**Weapons:** Crowbar (2D6 damage) and Sledgehammer (large, 3D6+3 damage), plus one weapon for each W.P. skill and 4D6+36 rounds of ammunition for each guns.

**Vehicle:** A sturdy bicycle to start. If a member of a Safe Haven Community, other vehicles and equipment may be provided as needed for specific assignments. Otherwise, the character must find and acquire a vehicle and equipment on his own. When a Scrounger gets a vehicle (pickup truck, SUV, or cargo van likely choices) he may choose to keep some additional equipment (more tools, cutting torch, water & gas cans) in it.

**Pay:** None, everything is barter and trade. Pay in the new, post-apocalyptic world is typically barter; an exchange of goods and services for the goods and services your character needs. The character's acquisition of trade goods (food, fuel, medicine, guns and ammo, etc.) can be the catalyst for numerous adventures.

**Trade Goods:** At first level the character has \$4D6x1,000 worth of trade goods.

## Shepherd of the Damned

### A post-Zombie Apocalypse O.C.C.

*"Sure, you could go that way, and probably end up dead. Or, you could follow me and live. Your choice."*

– Adrian Maloy, veteran Shepherd of the Damned

The world of Dead Reign is a dangerous place. Zombies, raiders, cultists, wild dogs and other menaces could be lurking around any corner. Survivors in search of a safe haven (even if just for the night) often find themselves walking blindly into danger. That's where the Shepherds of the Damned come in: men and women dedicated to finding the lost and confused and helping survivors find safe passage through the zombie infested landscape. Most are altruistic, although some might charge a hefty fee for their help. In either case, the help and services of Shepherds are highly sought-after and greatly welcomed.

They are called the *Shepherds of the Damned* because they spend most of their efforts going into urban environments where it is said anyone still trapped there is *damned*. These heroes go in and find and lead out those trapped in cities and towns to the outside world and to Safe Haven communities. The character may work alone, in pairs or in mixed groups of other heroes. Shepherds often work with *Half-Living*, *Reapers*, *Soldiers*, *Hound Masters* and *Ordinary People* to rescue captives of Death Cults, bandits and Retro-Savages, missing recovery teams, missing scouts and Reaper teams, lost travelers and children, kidnap victims and innocent people from the clutches of zombies and evildoers. They also go on missions to recover medicine and other supplies communities need to survive. This means most Shepherds pick a city or region as their area of operation and learn EVERYTHING they can about its layout, inhabitants, enemies of humanity, zombie occupation and habits, safe routes, secret passages, safe houses (actually more often small, hidden places where they and those they help can momentarily hide, rest, and recuperate), and other vital details. A Shepherd of the Damned also knows about supposed Safe Haven Communities and other human communities in remote wilderness areas within his region of operation, and points those he rescues in their direction.

These wiley characters are often good in a fight, but they use their heads, cunning and feet to escape trouble and lead people to safety. Thus, they are happy to trick, mislead, trap and avoid zombies and cultists rather than engage them in battle. The Shepherd's purpose is rescue, not battle or destroying the Creeping Doom. Their goal is to save lives, not battle monsters or madmen.

### Shepherd of the Damned

**Also known as** City Scouts and Rescue Scouts.

**Attribute Requirements:** I.Q. and M.A. 12 or better is strongly suggested, but not necessary.

**Alignments:** Any, but typically Principled (30%), Scrupulous (40%), and Unprincipled (20%).

**O.C.C. Bonuses:** +1D4 to M.E. and M.A. attributes, 1D6+4 to Spd, +3D6+5 to S.D.C., +1 to dodge, +1 to disarm, +1 to roll with impact, +2 to pull punch, and +3 vs Horror Factor.

**Occupation:** Doesn't matter what the character was *before* the Zombie Apocalypse, he's a *Shepherd of the Damned* now.

**Common Skills:** All; highly skilled.

#### O.C.C. Skills of the Shepherd of the Damned:

Barter (+5%)

Climb (+15%)

Cook (10%)

Dowsing (+15%)

Excavation (+5%)

First Aid (+5%)

Horsemanship: General or one Transportation skill of choice (+5%).

Identify Plants and Fruit (+20%)

Land Navigation (+20%)

Lore: Zombies (+10%; see Reapers for description)



Prowl (+10%)

Radio: Basic (+10%)

Running

Swim (+10%)

Track (people; +20%)

Wilderness Survival (+20%)

W.P. Ancient: Two of choice.

W.P.: Rifle or Shotgun

W.P. Modern: One of choice.

Hand to Hand: Basic, which can be changed to Expert at the cost of one Elective Skill, or to Martial Arts at the cost of two Elective Skills.

**Elective Skills:** Select five from the standard available Elective skill categories. These skills may reflect the character's occupation and life before the Zombie Apocalypse.

**Secondary Skills:** Select two Secondary Skills from the Secondary Skill List in the Skills section at levels 1, 3, 7, 11 & 15. These are additional areas of knowledge that do not get any bonuses, other than possible bonus for a high I.Q. All Secondary Skills start at the base skill level.

**Standard Equipment:** Traveling clothes which includes a hooded cloak, a set of street clothes, running shoes, a pair of boots, a pair of gloves, one full suit of *light* Modern Body Armor of choice (see Equipment section), rain poncho (hooded), 1D4 sheets of camouflage netting (blanket-sized), survival knife (2D4 S.D.C.), one heavy-duty flashlight, one small flashlight, pocket mirror, a disposable cigarette lighter, a refillable cigarette lighter, a box of wooden matches, a roll of duct tape, set of eating utensils (knife, fork, spoon, drinking cup), binoculars, walkie-talkie, sunglasses, two canteens, backpack, knapsack, food rations (2 weeks worth), and some personal items.

**Tools of the Trade:** Compass, pocket signal mirror, wristwatch, extra canteen, 1D6+6 road flares, 1D4+1 rocket parachute flare, 1D4+1 smoke grenades, one explosive grenade, silencer and flash suppressor for guns, gasmask and a first aid kit.

**Weapons:** One weapon for each W.P. plus a large crowbar (2D6 damage) and/or a wooden staff (2D6 damage), and each modern weapon has 6D6+60 extra rounds of ammunition.

**Vehicle:** None to start except for a sturdy bicycle. If a member of a Safe Haven Community, other vehicles and equipment

may be provided. Otherwise, the character must find and acquire his own equipment.

**Pay:** None, everything is barter and trade. Pay in the new, post-apocalyptic world is typically barter; an exchange of goods and services for the goods and services your character needs. The character's acquisition of trade goods (food, fuel, medicine, guns and ammo, etc.) can be the catalyst for numerous adventures.

**Trade Goods:** At first level the character has \$1D6x1,000 worth of trade goods.

## Soldier

### A post-Zombie Apocalypse O.C.C.

The post-Zombie Apocalypse Soldier O.C.C. is someone with recent military or police training and experience, or who had a professional career in the military or law enforcement. This may include any and all branches of the military, special forces, police, S.W.A.T., FBI, NSA, CIA, the National Guard and even firefighters and first responders who also have a background in combat. Whatever their origin, all are dedicated to saving lives and defending survivors first, and killing zombies second. All use military methodology, strategy, tactics, rank, weapons and gear. Many have additional training in search and rescue.

While they may not follow an official government or military leader, they have appointed their own squad and group leaders and follow military protocol. While one might think these soldiers left on their own might degenerate into warlords, gang leaders and thugs, most have not. Instead they are highly motivated to maintain order, save lives and destroy zombies. They are schooled in the ways of war, and use their skills and knowledge in the ongoing struggle against the zombie hordes. Many Soldiers are vital members of Safe Haven communities which they defend with their lives.

### Soldier

**Also known as** Apocalyptic Soldier and Free-Will Soldier.

**Attribute Requirements:** The courage to take a stand and fight to make a difference. High P.S., P.E. and other physical attributes are helpful, but not required. Some M.O.S. packages require minimum attributes.

**Alignment:** Any, but tend to be Principled (30%), Scrupulous (30%), or Unprincipled (30%).

**Occupation:** Doesn't matter what the character was *before* the Zombie Apocalypse, he's an *Apocalyptic Soldier* now. His areas of specialty for this O.C.C. are noted under O.C.C. Skills and M.O.S. packages, below.

**O.C.C. Soldier Bonuses:** +2D6+12 S.D.C., +1D4 to P.S., and +2 to P.E. attributes, +1 to Perception Rolls, +1 to roll with impact, +6% to save vs coma/death, and +2 vs Horror Factor.



Bonuses vs Zombies: +1 attack per melee round, +1 to strike, parry and dodge, and +1 to disarm. Applies only when fighting zombies!

**Common Skills:** All; basic.

**O.C.C. Skills of the Soldier:**

Climb (+10%)

Lore: Zombies (+10%; see Reapers for the skill description)

Military Etiquette (+20%)

Radio: Basic (+15%)

Running

Swim (+10%)

Sign Language (+10%; military)

Transportation: Automobile or Truck (+10%), pick one.

W.P. Ancient: One of choice (typically Blunt, Axe or Sword).

W.P. Rifle

Hand to Hand: Basic, which can be changed with the selection of some M.O.S. packages.

**M.O.S. Skills:** This is the character's area of military (or law enforcement) specialty. See M.O.S. skill packages at the end of this character stat block.

**Elective Skills:** Select 1D4+1 from the standard available categories. These skills *may* reflect other aspects of the character before the Zombie Apocalypse.

**Secondary Skills:** Select two Secondary Skills from the Secondary Skill List in the Skills section at levels 1, 4, 8, & 12. These are additional areas of knowledge that do not get any bonuses, other than a possible bonus for a high I.Q. All Secondary Skills start at the base skill level.

**Standard Equipment:** A suit of modern/military body armor (any including heavy; see equipment section), military fatigues, dress uniform, a set of street clothes, a pair of boots, a pair of leather gloves, rain poncho (cheap), one sheet of camouflage netting (large), survival knife (2D4 S.D.C.), first aid kit, one heavy-duty flashlight, one small flashlight, refillable cigarette lighter, disposable cigarette lighter, a book of matches, roll of duct tape, set of eating utensils (knife, fork, spoon, drinking cup), binoculars, walkie-talkie, sunglasses, two canteens, backpack, duffle bag, knapsack, food rations (1 week's worth), and some personal items.

**Tools of the Trade, Military Grade Weapons, Vehicles and Equipment:** One weapon for each W.P., plus each modern weapon has 2D6x10+140 extra rounds of ammunition (not all carried on the character's person), 1D6+1 road flares, 1D4+1 smoke grenades, 1D4+2 explosive hand grenades, tent, and bedroll.

**Vehicle:** A reliable motorcycle or jeep/SUV and 3D6+20 gallons of extra fuel. If a member of a Safe Haven Community or mobile military operation, other vehicles, spare parts, fuel, weapons and equipment may be provided as needed for specific assignments. Otherwise, the character must find and acquire his own equipment.

**Pay:** None, everything is barter and trade. Pay in the new, post-apocalyptic world is typically barter; an exchange of goods and services for the goods and services your character needs. A Soldier is a combat expert, zombie killer and res-

cueer of the innocent, that's his stock in trade. Military operations of all kinds are possible. Most people appreciate Soldiers who work to help others at little or no charge or work to protect a Safe Haven Community, but other Soldiers are mercenaries who sell their expertise as "guns for hire." Mercs are not generally well liked, trusted or respected, but seen as a necessary evil.

**Trade Goods:** \$2D6x1,000 worth of trade goods, probably military gear, weapons and ammo, some of which may be stashed in a safe place.

## M.O.S. Options

Select one of the following areas of specialty at first level. All M.O.S. skills are in addition to O.C.C., Elective, and Secondary Skills.

**Combat Engineer M.O.S.:** Requires an I.Q. of 12.

Computer Operation (+10%)

Demolitions (+12%)

Electrical Engineer (+10%)

Electricity Generation (+20%)

Math: Advanced (+10%)

Mining or Excavation (+15%)

Mechanical Engineer (+10%)

Weapons Engineer (+15%)

**Combat Mechanic M.O.S.:** Requires an I.Q. of 12.

Automotive or Aircraft Mechanics (+15%)

Armorer/Field Armorer (+10%)

Basic Mechanics (+20%)

Basic Electronics (+10%)

Computer Operation (+10%)

General Repair & Maintenance (+15%)

Jury-Rig or Locksmith (+10%)

**Communications Expert M.O.S.:** Requires an I.Q. of 9 or higher.

Basic Electronics (+15%)

Computer Operation (+12%)

Computer Programming (+10%)

Cryptography or Computer Hacking (+10%)

Electronic Countermeasures (+10%)

Sensory Equipment (+20%)

Surveillance or Optic Systems (+10%)

**Demolitions Expert M.O.S.:** Requires an I.Q. of 10 and P.P. of 12 or higher.

Basic Electronics (+15%)

Basic Mechanics (+10%)

Demolitions (+20%)

Demolitions Disposal (+20%)

Demolitions Underwater (+15%)

Munitions Expert (+10%)

Trap/Mine Detection (+30%)

W.P. Heavy Military Weapons

**Infantry Soldier M.O.S.:**

Camouflage (+15%)

Land Navigation (+10%)  
Recognize Weapon Quality (+10%)  
Boxing or Body Building  
Forced March  
W.P. Ancient: One of choice.  
W.P. Modern: One of choice.

**Law Enforcement M.O.S.:**

Combat Driving  
I.D. Undercover Agent (+6%)  
Law (General) (+20%)  
Roadwise (+10%)  
Streetwise (+20%)  
Tailing (+10%)  
W.P. Handguns  
W.P. Shotgun

**Law Enforcement: Undercover M.O.S.:** Requires an I.Q. of 10 or higher.

Change Hand to Hand: Basic to Expert.  
Disguise (+20%)  
I.D. Undercover Agent (+10%)  
Law (General) (+20%)  
Find Contraband (+10%)  
Intelligence (+10%)  
Tailing (+20%)  
Undercover Ops (+20%)  
W.P. Handguns

**Medic M.O.S.:** Requires an I.Q. and M.E. of 12 or higher.

Biology (+20%)  
Chemistry (+10%)  
Math: Advanced (+10%)  
Medical Doctor (+15%)  
Pathology (+5%)  
Science or Medical: One of choice (+10%).  
Sewing (+15%)

**Reconnaissance/Scout M.O.S.:** Requires an I.Q. of 10 or higher.

Detect Ambush (+15%)  
Detect Concealment (+15%)  
Land Navigation (+20%)  
Prowl (+15%)  
Intelligence (+16%)  
Tracking (people; +10%)  
Trap/Mine Detection (+5%)  
Wilderness Survival (+10%)

**Rescue M.O.S.:** Requires a P.S. and P.E. of 12 or higher.

Cook or Brewing (+10%)  
Excavation (+20%)  
Firefighting (+15%)  
NBC Warfare (+15%)  
Paramedic (+10%)  
Physical: One of choice.  
Rope Works (+10%)  
Sensory Equipment (+10%)  
Spelunking (+10%)

**Special Ops: Commando M.O.S.** Requires an I.Q. and P.E. of 10 or higher.

Change Hand to Hand: Basic to Commando.  
Intelligence (+10%)  
Rogue: One of choice (+10%).  
S.C.U.B.A. (+15%)  
Sniper or Demolitions (+16%)  
Wilderness Survival (+20%)  
W.P. Heavy Military Weapons  
W.P. Flamethrower  
W.P.: One of choice (any).

**Special Ops: Espionage M.O.S.:** Requires an I.Q. and M.E. of 10 or higher.

Change Hand to Hand: Basic to Martial Arts or Assassin.  
I.D. Undercover Agent or Seduction (+10%)  
Impersonation (+20%)  
Intelligence or Escape Artist (+10%)  
Interrogation (+16%)  
Photography (+10%)  
Rogue: One of choice (+10%).  
Surveillance (+15%)  
Undercover Ops (+12%)  
W.P. Ancient: One of choice.

**Transportation Specialist M.O.S.:** Requires a P.P. of 11 or higher.

Basic Mechanics (+5%)  
Combat Driving  
Military: Tanks & APCs or Combat Helicopters (+20%)  
Navigation (+10%)  
Transportation: Automobile or Motorcycle (+5%)  
Transportation: Truck or Motor Boat (+14%)  
Transportation: Two of choice (any; +10%).  
W.P. Blunt



## Survivor O.C.C.

### Ordinary People

The people who lived through the Wave and survived the Zombie Apocalypse inhabit a world seemingly gone mad. Though they come from every walk of life and every social and economic background, they all have one thing in common: they are *survivors*.

Actually, they are more than mere survivors. These people have chosen to fight. They've chosen not to give up, but to band together to find other survivors, help other people, battle the walking dead, establish safe haven communities, and rebuild human civilization. It is a herculean task taken on by ordinary men and women. Most of these characters are not trained in the art of war, and don't possess much in the way of combat skill, yet still they dare to take a stand against the legions of undead. They are not afraid to fight and destroy zombies when they have to. They are not afraid to go into urban areas to gather necessary supplies, find a lost child, or help a stranger – a fellow survivor – in need. Okay, maybe they *are* afraid, but they don't let that stop them from doing what's right. And that is what makes them, perhaps, the bravest heroes in this post-apocalyptic world.

The Survivor O.C.C. is an “everyman” classification that provides a wide array of options for players. All types of people fall under this O.C.C., from skilled professionals like doctors, scientists, engineers, mechanics, and entertainers to construction workers, physical laborers, truck drivers, waitresses, and students. The strength of their backs, what skills they may have,

their cunning and their courage are often the only currency they have to trade for shelter, supplies, or to garner the assistance of others. All do what they can and work to help other survivors stay alive and out of the hands of the walking dead.

### Survivor – Ordinary Person O.C.C.

**Attributes:** Roll standard 3D6 determination; see Character Creation in the rules section for attribute descriptions and possible bonuses.

**Alignment:** Any, but tend to be heroic characters of a good or Unprincipled alignment.

**O.C.C. Bonus:** +1 to save vs Horror Factor.

**P.P.E. Base Points for Player Characters:** Adult (over the age of 29): 1D4+1 P.P.E.; Young Adult (20-28 years old): 1D6+3 P.P.E.; Teenager (13-19 years old) 1D8+5 P.P.E.; Children (under the age of 13): 4D6+12 P.P.E. **Note:** People's potential psychic energy dissipates with age as their view of the world becomes narrower and specific interests occupy their attention and focus. A teenager is still growing, developing, thus, his/her P.P.E. is a little higher than a physically mature adult. An adult, in this case anyone older than 29 years of age, is fully developed physically and has expended P.P.E. on areas of study, interest and work.

**P.P.E. Note about Children (Ages 1 day to 12 years old):** P.P.E.: 4D6+12. The amount of P.P.E changes as the person grows and matures, both physically and emotionally. A child has the greatest P.P.E. because he or she is a walking energy reserve of unbridled potential. Thus, children and young adults are favored targets of zombies and Death Cultists, and

these monsters will go after them before adults whenever they have the chance.

**I.S.P.:** Not applicable.

**Level of Experience:** Some G.M.s may insist the character starts at level one, and as a Survivor of the Zombie Apocalypse, the character certainly is a first level Survivor. However, the character may have held his job for many years and may be more than first level in his occupation. Thus, roll 1D4 to determine the level that his *Occupational Skills* were at when the Wave hit.

If a three is rolled, the character was a third level Mechanic, Doctor, whatever, and his Common and Occupational Skills (with bonuses) should start at THIRD level. These skills start at a higher level of skill proficiency, but they are frozen and do not improve until the character reaches the same level as a Survivor. At that point, ALL skills continue to advance with experience. Thus, the third level Doctor does not see his Occupational Skills increase until the character becomes a third level Survivor. When he reaches fourth level, now ALL skills increase with experience.

All other skills (Elective and Secondary) start at level one. If the Game Master doesn't allow for the Occupational Skills to start at a higher level, then all skills start at level one (it's easier that way).

**Common Skills:** All.

**Other Skills:** As per occupation; see table and choices below.

**Occupations & Skills of Survivors:** In the post-apocalyptic setting of *Dead Reign*, the occupation is what the character did for a living before the Wave struck, the dead rose and civilization collapsed. The character is an *ordinary person* who refused to give up and uses his smarts, skills and brawn to the best of his ability to stay alive, help other survivors, and fight the walking dead. Select *one* occupation.

**Survivor Standard Equipment:** The clothes on their back and one extra set, running shoes and/or a pair of boots, a pair of gloves, a leather jacket, one suit of Biker or leather armor, rain poncho (good quality, with a hood), 1D4 sheets of camouflage netting (blanket-sized), box cutter (1D4 S.D.C.), survival knife (2D4 S.D.C.), first aid kit, one heavy-duty flashlight, one small flashlight, pocket mirror, 1D4 disposable cigarette lighters, a book of matches, roll of duct tape, roll of string (1D6x10 yards/meters), 1D4 sets of eating utensils (knife, fork, spoon, drinking cup), binoculars, walkie-talkie, sunglasses, two canteens, backpack, duffle bag, bedroll or knapsack, food rations (1D4 weeks worth), and some personal items. A cross or other holy symbol as a necklace or pocket-sized item is optional. It has no power against zombies, but gives many people solace in times of need.

**Survivor Professional Equipment – “Tools of the Trade”:**

The character *may* have items suited to his or her occupation. For instance, a medical professional would carry a first aid kit, medicine and basic surgical supplies; a mechanic would have 1D4 tool kits and an assortment of tools and related gear; a professional driver will have one vehicle and a tool kit, and so on.

**Survivor Weapons:** One ancient weapon of choice (a club, shovel, hammer, mace, wooden staff, hatchet, axe, curved

swords and machetes are all common, but could be others), plus a crowbar or length of pipe (2D6 damage), one handgun, and one shotgun or rifle, each weapon has 1D6x10+40 extra rounds of ammunition (bullets).

**Vehicle:** A sturdy bicycle to start. If a member of a safe have community, motorcycles or vehicles may be provided for particular missions and operations. Otherwise, the character must find and acquire his own vehicle, gasoline and vehicle related items.

**Pay:** None, everything is barter and trade. Pay in the new, post-apocalyptic world is typically barter; an exchange of goods and services for the goods and services your character needs. The character's acquisition of trade goods (food, fuel, medicine, guns and ammo, etc.) can be the catalyst for numerous adventures.

**Trade Goods:** \$1D4x1,000 worth of trade goods, some may be stashed in a safe place.

## Available Survivor Occupations

### An Alphabetical Listing of 42

#### Notable Occupations for Dead Reign

Select *one* occupation. It is presumed that even a young character has already gone through a number of jobs and this is the one he has settled on.

The descriptions that follow include a range of common occupations for your consideration. You may roll percentile dice for random determination, or *choose* an occupation, whichever the Game Master allows.

Game Masters will find using the random roll table is excellent for creating Non-Player Characters (NPCs) and villains.

- 01-02% Artist: Illustrator Commercial
- 03-04% Artist: Arts & Crafts
- 05-06% Athletics: Amateur Competitor
- 07-08% Athletics: Extreme Sports
- 09-10% Athletics: Fighting Competitor
- 11-12% Athletics: Sportsman/Outdoorsman
- 13-14% Automotive Mechanic
- 15-16% Builder/Construction Contractor
- 17-18% Communications Engineer
- 19-20% Computer Programmer
- 21-23% Computer Technician
- 24-25% Construction Worker
- 26-27% Criminal: Con Artist
- 28-29% Criminal: Hit Man/Assassin
- 30-31% Criminal: Professional Thief
- 32-33% Criminal: Thug/Gang Banger
- 34-35% Engineer: Electrical or Mechanical
- 36-37% Entertainer
- 38-39% Factory Worker
- 40-41% Farmer
- 42-43% Firefighter/Fire & Rescue
- 44-45% Housekeeper
- 46-47% Journalist/Creative Writer

48-49% Landscaper/Groundskeeper  
 50-51% Medicine: Medical Doctor  
 52-53% Medicine: Paramedic  
 54-55% Medicine: Psychiatrist  
 56-57% Medicine: Veterinarian  
 58-59% Police Officer  
 60-61% Police Detective/CSI  
 62-64% Police Undercover Officer  
 65-66% Police Tactical Assault/SWAT  
 67-70% Private Detective/P.I.  
 71-75% Professional Driver  
 76-80% Professional Driver: Big Rigs  
 81-84% Professional Driver: Specialized  
 85-88% Scholar/Professor/Scientist  
 89-91% Store: Clerk  
 92-93% Store: Owner/Retailer  
 94-95% Student: College  
 96-97% Survivalist/Militia  
 98-00% Wait Staff or Cook

### Optional Table: Success & Annual Income Before the Apocalypse

Roll percentile dice. Might be a nice character element.

01-20% Just getting started/struggling artist – 2D6x\$1,000  
 21-40% Modest success – 3D6x\$1,000 +\$12,000  
 41-60% Successful – 5D6x\$1,000 +\$30,000  
 61-80% Very Successful – 6D6x\$1,000 +\$60,000  
 81-00% Top in his field – 2D4x\$10,000 +90,000

### Survivor Occupation Descriptions

**Aircraft Pilot:** See Professional Driver: Specialized.

**01-02% Artist: Commercial Illustrator:** A highly skilled job that requires creative talent, self-discipline and work ethic. May have been on staff or worked as a freelancer with totally flexible hours. Ultimately, the client wants a quality job on deadline.

Occupational Skills: Automobile (+4%), Art (+25%; professional quality), Computer Operation (+15%), Creative Writing or Sewing (+10%), Research (+10%), Wardrobe & Grooming (+10%), and Whittling & Sculpting (+10%).

Elective Skills: Select eight from the standard available categories, but can also select *Forgery* (+12%) or *Impersonation* (+5%) from the Espionage category and the character gets a +10% bonus to Domestic and Technical skills. **Note:** May select two skills from the Rogue Category if the character grew up in a tough, urban environment like New York City, Detroit, Chicago or Los Angeles.

Secondary Skills Available: Select five from the standard available categories.

Pay in the Old World: Varied with the level of success and area of artistic endeavor.

Pay in the New World: Barter for services rendered. Not much demand for pretty pictures. Some use for sign makers. Some

Haven communities may have a use for artwork, murals, etc. May have to use other skills or rely on physical labor to get by.

**03-04% Artist: Arts and/or Crafts:** Exhibited and sold artwork or craft items which might include woodworking, leather working, jewelry, etc., at art shows, street fairs, art festivals, and galleries, as well as online. May have worked at home or in a studio (rental); flexible hours.

Occupational Skills: Automobile (+4%), Art (+25%; professional quality), Computer Operation (+10%), Gemology or Creative Writing (+10%), Sewing (+15%), Leather Working or Masonry (+15%), Research (+10%), Wardrobe & Grooming or Gardening (+10%), Performance or Public Speaking (+15%), and Whittling & Sculpting (+10%).

Elective Skills: Select eight from the standard available categories, but can also select *Disguise* (+10%) or *Forgery* (+12%) from the Espionage category and the character gets a +10% bonus to Communications skills and +5% to Domestic and Technical Skills. **Note:** May select two skills from the Rogue Category if the character grew up in a tough, urban environment like New York City, Detroit, Chicago or Los Angeles.

Secondary Skills Available: Select five from the standard available categories.

Pay in the Old World: Varied with the level of competition and prize money (if any).

Pay in the New World: Barter for services rendered. Leatherwork, sewing and similar skills are always in demand. May have other useful skills.

**05-06% Athletics: Amateur Competitor – Ex-College, Semi-Pro Athlete, or Dedicated Amateur.** This character loved athletics and had a history of being involved in sports, however, he or she had never attained professional conditioning or status. May have worked at a recreation center or as a school coach, assistant coach, or camp or sports coordinator.

Occupational Skills: Automobile (+6%), Aerobic Athletics or Running, Athletics (General), Climbing or Swimming (+20%), First Aid (+10%), Bicycling or Kayaking/Canoeing (+13%), Gardening or Dance (+10%), and two Physical or W.P. Ancient skills of choice.

Elective Skills: Select six from the standard available categories, but the character gets a +5% bonus to Communications, Domestic, Horsemanship, Technical and Wilderness skills.

Secondary Skills Available: Select five from the standard available categories.

Pay in the Old World: Varied with the level of competition and prize money (if any).

Pay in the New World: Barter for services rendered. A strong back can always find work. May have other useful skills.

**07-08% Athletics: Extreme Sports:** This character was a skilled competitor and semi-professional athlete who regularly competed in tournaments, contests and events that paid *prize money* to the competitors. Events may have included track and field, skateboarding, bicycling, motocross (dirt bikes), tennis, golf, skiing, swimming, bowling, and similar events.

Occupational Skills: Acrobatics or Gymnastics (+15%), Bicycling (+16%), Automobile (+13%), Climbing (+20%) or Running, Combat Driving or Hand to Hand: Expert, Performance or



Public Speaking (+15%), Land Navigation (+10%), Motorcycles & Snowmobiles or Water Skiing & Surfing (+14%), and two Physical or two Rogue skills of choice.

Elective Skills: Select six from the standard available categories, but the character gets a +10% bonus to Horsemanship, Physical (when appropriate), Transportation, and Wilderness skills.

Secondary Skills Available: Select two from the standard available categories at levels 1, 3, 4, 8, and 12.

Special Bonus: Add a +10% bonus to any *one* Physical or Transportation skill that is an Occupational or Elective Skill. This was the character's favorite and best event.

Pay in the Old World: Varied with the level of competition and prize money (if any).

Pay in the New World: Barter for services rendered. Bicycling and other piloting skills can make for an excellent Scrounger, messenger, lookout and scout, among other things. May have other useful skills.

**09-10% Athletics: Fighting Competitor – Boxing, Wrestling or Tough-Man Competitions:** These characters are bruisers who enjoyed rough and tumble sports. Many are big, muscular competitors.

Occupational Skills: Automobile or Motorcycle (+6%), Body Building or Athletics (General), Boxing or Wrestling, Hand to Hand Combat of choice (excluding Assassin and Commando), Kick Boxing or Forced March, Performance or Seduction (+15%), Running or Swimming (+15%), and two Physical or two W.P. Ancient skills of choice.

Elective Skills: Select six total from the standard available categories plus Rogue, but the character gets a +10% bonus to Communications, Domestic, Physical, Transportation, and Wilderness skills.

Secondary Skills Available: Select one from the standard available categories at levels 1, 3, 6, 9, 12 and 15.

Special Bonus: +1 on initiative and +2D6+3 to S.D.C.

Pay in the Old World: Varied with the level of competition and prize money (if any).

Pay in the New World: Barter for services rendered. Fighting skills might make the character a good defender/protector, militia man, or zombie hunter, among other things. A strong back can usually find work. May have other useful skills.

**11-12% Athletics: Sportsman/Outdoorsman.** A character who competed in outdoor sports and competitions such as fishing, hunting, cross-country hiking, etc.

Occupational Skills: Automobile (+6%), Aerobic Athletics or Prowl (+10%), Fishing (+15%), Hand to Hand: Basic, Hunting, Land Navigation (+20%), Outdoorsmanship, Running or Swimming (+15%), Skin & Prepare Animal Hides (+10%), W.P. Archery & Targeting, W.P. Rifles, one Modern W.P. of choice, and two Physical or Wilderness skills of choice.

Elective Skills: Select five from the standard available categories plus Rogue skills, but the character gets a +10% bonus to Domestic, Horsemanship, Rogue, Transportation, and Wilderness skills.

Secondary Skills Available: Select four from the standard available categories.

Special Bonus: +1 to strike with any *one* Ancient or Modern W.P., or +15% to any one Wilderness skill (may be added to an Occupational or Elective Skill selection).

Pay in the Old World: Varied with the level of competition and prize money (if any).

Pay in the New World: Barter for services rendered. The ability to hunt game, provide food, butcher and prepare meat, skin and prepare animal hides, and similar abilities has suddenly become a hot commodity. May have other useful skills.

**13-14% Automotive Mechanic.** A grease monkey who enjoyed working on cars, rebuilding engines and solving problems. May be male or female, young or old. May have once owned his own garage, worked for a garage or car dealer full-time or part-time, or worked as a sort of handyman taking odd jobs on a sort of freelance basis.

Occupational Skills: Automobile (+12%), Athletics (General) or Physical Labor, Automotive Mechanics (+20%), Basic Electronics (+15%), Basic Mechanics (+20%), Computer Operation (+10%), General Repair & Maintenance (+15%), Locksmith or Jury-Rig (+10%), Streetwise or Roadwise (+10%), and two Transportation skills of choice (+10%).

Elective Skills: Select six from the standard available categories, but can also select *any* Mechanical skills and the character gets a +10% bonus on Mechanical, Technical and Transportation skills.

Secondary Skills Available: Select five from the standard available categories.

Pay in the Old World: Varied with the level of success, experience and reputation; generally good to very good.

Pay in the New World: Barter for services rendered. The ability to maintain, repair, and modify vehicles and machinery is a hot commodity! May have other useful skills.

**15-16% Builder/House Construction Contractor.** Carpenter and general construction – is familiar with everything from roofing, laying concrete, brick work, plumbing, at least basic electrical, woodworking, making fences, painting houses, staining and waterproofing wood, handyman work, etc., to building houses and other structures from the ground up.

Occupational Skills: Basic Electronics (+20%), Basic Mechanics (+15%), Carpentry (+20%), Computer Operation (+6%), Electricity Generation (+10%), Masonry (+20%), Physical Labor, Salvage (+15%), Recycling (+10%) and Truck (+10%).

Elective Skills: Select seven from the standard available categories, but can also select *any* Technical and Transportation skills (+10%).

Secondary Skills Available: Select two from the standard available categories at levels 1, 4, 8 and 12.

Pay in the Old World: Varied with the level of success and experience, but was generally very good.

Pay in the New World: Barter for services rendered. The ability to build, repair and maintain is in high demand. May have other useful skills.

**17-18% Communications Engineer.** Considered a highly skilled position, this character may have been ex-military or

may have worked for a radio or television station, telephone company, or private industry involved in communications, cable, and similar work.

Occupational Skills: Basic Mechanics (+15%), Electrical Engineer (+15%), Computer Operation (+15%), Computer Programming (+20%), Cryptography or Laser Communications (+15%), Electronic Countermeasures (+20%), Technical Writing (+20%), and four Communications skills of choice (+15%).

Elective Skills: Select eight from the standard available categories, but can also select *any* Electronics skills (+15%), and gets a +10% bonus on Communications, Science and Technical skills (+10%).

Bonus Skills: If ex-Military (at least a 01-33% chance), the character also gets Hand to Hand: Basic, Running, W.P. Rifle, and two Military or Espionage skills of choice (+10%).

Secondary Skills Available: Select three from the standard available categories at levels 1, 5 and 10.

Pay in the Old World: Varied with the level of success and experience, but was generally very good.

Pay in the New World: Barter for services rendered. The ability to maintain and repair, as well as electrical expertise, is in high demand. May have other useful skills.

**19-20% Computer Programmer/Systems Engineer.** Considered a skilled position, this worker spent most of his time writing programs, testing programs, creating utilities, tweaking software, and may have done some technical support.

Occupational Skills: Basic Electronics (+10%), Computer Operation (+20%), Computer Programming (+24%), Computer Hacking (+15%), Electronic Countermeasures (+15%), Research (+15%), Technical Writing (+20%), and two Communications skills at +10%.

Elective Skills: Select seven from the standard available categories, but can also select Computer Repair, and gets a +10% bonus on Communications and Technical, and +5% on Science skills.

Secondary Skills Available: Select three from the standard available categories at levels 1, 5 and 10.

Pay in the Old World: Varied with the level of success and experience, but was generally very good.

Pay in the New World: Barter for services rendered. Computer skills, in general, have little value, but the ability to maintain and repair electronics is in demand. May have other useful skills.

**21-23% Computer Technician.** This was the hardware guy who focused on physical upgrades, modifications, customization, data retrieval, and fixing other people's mistakes and problems. Considered a skilled position.

Occupational Skills: Basic Electronics (+10%), Computer Operation (+15%), Computer Repair (+25%), Electronic Countermeasures (+15%), General Repair & Maintenance (+20%), Jury-Rig (+10%), Sensory Equipment (+10%), Technical Writing (+10%), and two Communications skills of choice (+15%).

Elective Skills: Select six from the standard available categories, and gets a +10% bonus on Communications, and Technical skills, and +5% on Science skills.

Secondary Skills Available: Select three from the standard available categories at levels 1, 5 and 10.

Pay in the Old World: Varied with the level of success and experience, but was generally very good.

Pay in the New World: Barter for services rendered. Computer skills, in general, have little value, but the ability to maintain and repair electronics and other devices, as well as use sensory equipment is in demand. May have other useful skills.

**24-25% Construction Worker/Crane Operator.** A skilled laborer involved in industrial building, carpentry, excavation, and the use of heavy machines (cranes, trucks, earthmovers, etc.). Work that appeals to guys who like to build, work with their hands, and solve problems.

Occupational Skills: Basic Electronics (+10%), Basic Mechanics (+15%), Body Building or Hand to Hand: Basic, Carpentry (+20%), Locksmith (+15%), Excavation or Mining (+20%), General Repair & Maintenance (+10%), Jury-Rig (+10%), Masonry or Boat Building (+15%), Physical Labor, Radio: Basic (+10%) and Tracked Vehicles (+16%).

Elective Skills: Select seven from the standard available categories, plus *any* Mechanical skills, and APCs & Tanks, the character can also select any Demolitions skills (+10%), and gets a +10% bonus on Mechanical and Technical skills.

Secondary Skills Available: Select three from the standard available categories at levels 1, 5 and 10.

Pay in the Old World: Varied with the level of success and experience, but was generally very good.

Pay in the New World: Barter for services rendered. The ability to operate heavy equipment and tracked vehicles, build, repair and maintain is in high demand! May have other useful skills.

**26-27% Criminal: Con Artist/Huckster.** Not all characters are good guys, and this one used his charm and gift for gab to cheat people out of their belongings, valuables, and information.

**Character Note:** A player character may be an irascible rogue rather than an all out criminal, or supposedly a reformed con man who now applies his abilities against the bad guys. Suitable for NPC (Non-Player Character) villains as well.

Alignment Note for Player Characters: The alignment of this character cannot be better than *Unprincipled* (is tempted to take advantage of anybody, but works hard at trying to do the right thing most of the time and con only bad guys and evildoers), *Anarchist* (self-serving and shows loyalty to those who have earned it, everyone else is a "mark"), or *Aberrant* (evil with a twisted code of honor).

Occupational Skills: Barter (+20%), Find Contraband (+14%), Gemology or Appraise Antiques (+15%), Hand to Hand: Basic, Intelligence (+16%), Performance (+20%), Public Speaking (+15%), Seduction (+20%), Streetwise (+20%), and two Rogue or Espionage skills of choice (+15%).

Elective Skills: Select seven total from the standard available categories plus Rogue skills, but the character gets a +10% bonus on any Communications, Domestic, Rogue, and Technical skills.

Secondary Skills Available: Select five from the standard available categories.

Special Bonus: +1D4+1 to M.A. attribute, +1 on initiative, and add a +10% bonus to any *one* skill that is the character's area of speciality or special interest.

Pay in the Old World: Varied with the level of success and experience, but was generally good to very good.

Pay in the New World: Barter for services rendered. This character is likely to earn his keep as a trader, scout, or crook who victimizes other human survivors. May have other useful skills.

**28-29% Criminal: Hit Man/Assassin.** A professional "enforcer" who hurt, threatened and killed people for money. Probably a bad guy and a stone cold killer, but could have been a government agent. May have worked for the mob, the government, or freelance as a mercenary working for any government, company or individual who could afford him.

**Character Note:** A player character who is not evil may be a government agent, a merc who only sells his services to liquidate "bad guys," or a character who now sells his services to hunt zombies and eliminate other problems for those willing to pay his price (trades for goods and services he needs). Suitable for NPC (Non-Player Character) villains as well.

Alignment Note for Player Characters: The alignment of this character cannot be better than *Unprincipled* (is tempted to use violence to solve all his problems, but works hard at trying to do the right thing and save his anger or frustration for the bad guys), *Anarchist* (self-serving and shows loyalty to those who have earned it, everyone else is fair game), or *Aberrant* (evil with a twisted code of honor).

Occupational Skills: Boxing, Hand to Hand: Martial Arts or Assassin, I.D. Undercover Agent (+20%), Munitions Expert (+15%), Prowl or Climb (+15%), Recognize Weapon Quality (+15%), Sniper, Streetwise (+15%), Tracking (+20%), Undercover Ops (+15%), W.P. Handguns, W.P. Rifles, W.P. Shotgun, and one W.P. Ancient of choice.

Elective Skills: Select eight total from the standard available categories plus Rogue skills, but the character gets a +10% bonus on Communications, Physical, Rogue, and Transportation skills.

Secondary Skills Available: Select four from the standard available categories.

Special Bonus: +1 to strike with any one W.P. Modern Weapon or any one W.P. Ancient Weapon; the killer's weapon of choice.

Pay in the Old World: Varied with the level of success, experience and reputation, but was generally very good.

Pay in the New World: Barter for services rendered. This character is likely to earn his keep as a protector or zombie killer. A mercenary may continue to sell/trade his services to people for a price, and a bad guy may still victimize other human survivors. May also be able to use his skill with weapons to hunt and provide food, and may have other useful skills.

**30-31% Criminal: Professional Thief.** Not all characters are heroic, and this one is a self-serving thief, then and now.

**Character Note:** A player character may be a thief with a heart of gold, or an anti-hero who is supposedly a reformed thief now applying his thieving skills against real criminals and forces of evil. May also be a reformed thief turned *Security Specialist* or *Detective* or *Espionage Agent*. If so, he is officially

one of those occupations and gets paid accordingly, but uses the skills below. Suitable for NPCs as well as player characters.

Alignment Note for Player Characters: The alignment of this character cannot be anything other than *Unprincipled* (steals only from bad guys and not nice people), *Anarchist* (selfish), or *Aberrant* (evil with a code of honor).

Occupational Skills: Automobile or Motorcycle (+14%), Barter (+10%), Climb or Running (+15%), Hand to Hand: Basic, Law (+10%), Pick Locks (+20%), Palming (+20%), Pick Pockets or Basic Electronics (+15%), Prowl or I.D. Undercover Agent (+15%), Streetwise (+12%), and two Rogue or Espionage skills of choice (+10%).

Elective Skills: Select seven total from the standard available categories plus Rogue skills, but the character gets a +10% bonus on Communications, Domestic, Rogue, and Technical skills.

Secondary Skills Available: Select five from the standard available categories.

Special Bonus: +1 to Perception Rolls, and add a +5% bonus to any *one* Rogue or Occupational skill.

Pay in the Old World: Varied with the level of success and experience, but was generally good to very good.

Pay in the New World: Barter for services rendered. This character is likely to earn his keep as a trader (barter his stolen goods), scout, or crook who victimizes other human survivors. May have other useful skills.

**32-33% Criminal: Thug/Gang Banger.** Not all characters are heroic, and this one used to be a thug and petty criminal and/or a member of a gang. Tends to be tough, use intimidation and look to rule the streets or make a big score, depending on the individual.

**Character Note:** A player character may be a tough guy who has forsaken being a thug to become a hero, who is supposedly a reformed gang banger or criminal now applying his skills to fight the walking dead and help people survive in a world gone mad. Or he may still be an opportunist looking to bang out his own turf, be boss and rule over his own piece of real estate. In fact, many "gang bangers" – good and bad – are hell bent on reclaiming "their cities" from the walking dead and see Death Cults and Retro-Savages as nut-jobs and dangerous rival gangs that need to be "removed." Suitable for NPCs as well as player characters.

Alignment Note for Player Characters: The alignment of this character cannot be anything other than *Unprincipled* (steals only from bad guys and not nice people), *Anarchist* (selfish), or *Aberrant* (evil with a code of honor). Non-Player Characters (NPCs) can be evil, too.

Occupational Skills: Automobile or Motorcycle (+14%), Barter (+10%), Climb or Running (+15%), Hand to Hand: Basic, Law (+10%), Pick Locks (+20%), Palming (+20%), Pick Pockets or Basic Electronics (+15%), Prowl or I.D. Undercover Agent (+15%), Streetwise (+12%), W.P. Knife or W.P. Blunt, W.P. Handguns or W.P. Submachine-Gun, and two Rogue or Espionage skills of choice (+10%).

Elective Skills: Select six total from the standard available categories plus Rogue skills, but the character gets a +10% bonus on Communications, Rogue, and Technical skills. **Note:** Is likely to know one or more W.P.s.

Secondary Skills Available: Select five from the standard available categories.

Special Bonus: +1 to Perception Rolls, and add a +5% bonus to any *one* Rogue or Occupational Skill.

Pay in the Old World: Varied with the level of success and experience, but was generally good to very good.

Pay in the New World: Barter for services rendered. This character is likely to earn his keep with his fists and blazing guns as a protector/defender, but could also be a trader (barter his ill-gotten goods), scout, or thug who still victimizes other human survivors. May have other useful skills.

**Detective:** See Private Detective.

**34-35% Engineer: Electrical or Mechanical.** An expert in either Electrical or Mechanical Engineering in regard to industrial usage, factories, robots and heavy machinery, building/construction, power, and other areas involving mechanics and electricity.

Occupational Skills Electrical: Basic Mechanics (+10%), Computer Operation (+20%), Creative or Technical Writing (+20%), Electrical Engineer (+20%), Electricity Generation (+20%), Jury-Rig (+20%), Literacy: Other Language (written; +10%), Research (+25%), and four skills all selected from *any* of the following categories: Electrical (+15%), Technical (+10%) and Science (+5%).

Occupational Skills Mechanical: Basic Electronics (+15%), Computer Operation (+20%), Creative or Technical Writing (+20%), Jury-Rig (+20%), Literacy: Other Language (written; +10%), Locksmith (+15%), Mechanical Engineer (+20%), Research (+25%), and four skills all selected from *any* of the following categories: Mechanical (+15%), Technical (+10%) and Science (+5%).

Elective Skills: Select seven total from the standard available categories plus Electrical, Mechanical and Science, but the character gets a +10% bonus on Domestic, Communications, Electrical, Mechanical, Science and Technical skills.

Secondary Skills Available: Select two from the standard available categories at levels 1, 3, 7, 11, and 14.

Special Bonus: An additional +10% on any one skill; the character's area of expertise or an area of special interest.

Pay in the Old World: Varied with the level of success and experience, but was generally very good.

Pay in the New World: Barter for services rendered. The ability to provide electrical power, fix electronic, build, repair and maintain machinery is in high demand! May have other useful skills.

**36-37% Entertainer:** A professional singer, musician, dancer, comedian, clown, juggler, media actor (commercials, bit parts on television), stage actor, voice actor (radio, TV commercials, cartoons), and similar forms of public entertainment. The actor is skilled and competent, but like most actors, was not famous, but was making a decent living when the Wave hit.

Occupational Skills: Body Building or Aerobic Athletics, Dance (+15%), Impersonation or Disguise (i.e., make-up and costume, +15%), Impersonate Voice & Sound or TV/Video (+15%), Play Musical Instrument (one of choice, +20%), Performance

(+20%), Public Speaking (+15%), Seduction or Gambling (+10%), Sing (+20%), and Wardrobe & Grooming (+20%).

Elective Skills: Select eight from the standard available categories, but the character gets a +5% bonus to Communications, Domestic, Technical and Transportation skills.

Secondary Skills Available: Select five from the standard available categories.

Special Bonus: +2 to M.A. or P.B. attribute.

Pay in the Old World: Varied with the level of success, experience and reputation; generally good to very good.

Pay in the New World: Barter for services rendered. Especially in the nightmare world of the Zombie Apocalypse people need to have their spirits lifted and their minds distracted by song, music and entertainment. Its not a necessity, but it is desired and enough to earn an entertainer a hot meal and perhaps a place to sleep. However, the character may have to use his brawn and other skills to trade. May have other useful skills.

**38-39% Factory Worker.** This character may have worked for a big corporation in the steel or automotive industry, or a small independent machine shop. It was hard work, operating heavy machines and presses or working on an assembly line doing parts installation, building or servicing.

Occupational Skills: Automobile or Motorcycle (+6%), Athletics (General) or Outdoorsmanship, General Repair & Maintenance (+10%), Physical Labor, Gambling or Streetwise (+10%), Hand to Hand: Basic, Salvage or First Aid (+15%), two Physical or two Rogue skills of choice (+10%), and two Mechanical or two Military skills of choice (+10%; if the latter, the character is ex-military).

Elective Skills: Select six total from the standard available categories, but the character gets a +10% bonus on Communications, Domestic, and Transportation skills. **Note:** May select a total of two skills from the Rogue or Physical categories if the character grew up in a tough, urban environment like New York City, Detroit, Chicago or Los Angeles.

Secondary Skills Available: Select three from the standard available categories at levels 1, 3, 7, 11 and 15.

Special Bonus: If ex-military the character also gets W.P. Rifle and Military Etiquette.

Pay in the Old World: Varied with the level of success and experience, but was generally good.

Pay in the New World: Barter for services rendered. The ability to maintain or repair equipment and machinery is always in demand, and a strong back can usually find some kind of work for food, room and board, or a fair share in community resources. May have other useful skills.

**40-41% Farmer: Agriculture & Livestock.** A professional skilled in raising crops and animals for commercial processing, distribution and sale.

Occupational Skills: Animal Husbandry (+15%), Barter (+15%), Brewing (+15%), First Aid (+10%), Herding (+20%), Horsemanship: General (+10%), Identify Plants & Fruit (+20%), Physical Labor, Preserve Food (+20%), Skin & Prepare Animal Hides (+15%), Truck (+12%), Veterinary Science (+6%) and W.P. Shotgun.

Elective Skills: Select seven from the standard available categories, but the character gets a +10% bonus to Domestic, Technical and Wilderness skills.

Secondary Skills Available: Select five from the standard available categories.

Special Bonus: +2 to P.S. or P.E. attribute.

Pay in the Old World: Varied with the level of success and experience, but was generally good.

Pay in the New World: Barter for services rendered. The ability raise food crops and animals, care for livestock, butcher animals and preserve food is in very high demand! May have other useful skills.

**42-43% Firefighter/Fire & Rescue**: A skilled but high-risk profession specializing in fire and crisis. May have been part of a Fire Department, rescue unit, or a rescue team for private industry.

Occupational Skills: Automobile (+10%), Body Building, Climb (+20%), Combat Driving, Computer Operation (10%), Cook or Brewing (+15%), Excavation (+20%), Firefighting (+25%), Paramedic (+10%), Radio: Basic (+15%), Roadwise (+14%), Rope Works (+25%), Truck (+14%), and W.P. Axe.

Elective Skills: Select seven from the standard available categories, but the character gets a +10% bonus to Domestic, Medical, Science, Technical and Transportation skills.

Secondary Skills Available: Select four from the standard available categories.

Special Bonus: +2 to Perception Rolls when dealing with fire, firefighting, rescue and the aftermath of a fire.

Pay in the Old World: Varied with the level of success, experience and reputation; generally good.

Pay in the New World: Barter for services rendered. Firefighting and rescue are always in high demand. May have other useful skills.

**44-45% Housekeeper**. This was someone who made a living cleaning as part of a maid service, office maintenance, janitorial service, and similar work, but may also include stay at home moms and dads.

Occupational Skills: Aerobic Athletics, Automobile (+10%), Computer Operation (10%), Cook (+15%), Gardening(+10%), General Repair & Maintenance (+10%), Housekeeping (20%), Recycle (+20%), Sewing (+15%), and Wardrobe & Grooming (+10%).

Elective Skills: Select seven total from the standard available categories, but the character gets a +5% bonus on Communications, Domestic, Technical and Transportation skills. **Note**: May also select any or all of the following skills as an Elective Skill: Basic Electronics (+5%), Basic Mechanics (+5%), and First Aid (+10%).

Secondary Skills Available: Select four from the standard available categories.

Special Bonus: +1 to Perception Rolls when dealing with children, cleaning, organizing and living spaces.

Pay in the Old World: Varied with the level of success, experience and reputation; generally good.

Pay in the New World: Barter for services rendered. There is always work for someone willing to wash and repair clothing and linens, and do manual labor. May have other useful skills.

**46-47% Journalist/Media Reporter or Creative Writer**. May have been a tabloid or magazine reporter, photo-journalist, TV or radio reporter, online journalist, investigative reporter, beat reporter, or news researcher, and similar media journalists. Whatever the character's exact title or medium for presenting the news, he was a "news hound" always on the prowl for an interesting story, breaking news or an exclusive. In the aftermath of the Wave, he is probably one of the few people still looking for answers to how, why and who is responsible.

A creative writer is a bit different. While he may have written books, articles, and commentaries inspired by current events, news and history, he predominantly created works of fiction. This could have ranged from historical pieces or romance novels to horror and science fiction, even comic books, role-playing games and videogames.

Occupational Skills: Automobile (+8%), Computer Operation (+15%), Creative Writing or Technical Writing (+15%, professional quality), Find Contraband or TV/Video (+10%), History or Law (+15%), I.D. Uncover Agent (+12%) or Tailing, Performance or Public Speaking (+10%), Photography or Philosophy (+15%), Research (+20%) or Interrogation (+10%), Streetwise or Business & Finance (+12%), and Wardrobe & Grooming (+10%).

Elective Skills: Select seven from the standard available categories, but the character gets a +10% bonus to Communications, Domestic, and Technical skills.

Secondary Skills Available: Select three from the standard available categories at levels 1, 5 and 10.

Special Bonus: +1 to Perception Rolls and a +10% bonus to *one* skill of choice (his area of expertise or special interest).

Pay in the Old World: Varied with the level of success, experience and reputation; generally good to very good.

Pay in the New World: Barter for services rendered. There is little perceived need for writers or reporters, however they may be able to use their skills as a scout, scavenger, or general help and labor. A strong back can usually find some kind of work for food, room and board, or a fair share in community resources. May have other useful skills.

**48-49% Lawn & Landscaping/Gardener/Groundskeeper**. The character is trained (probably on the job training) in the care, grooming, trimming and nurturing of trees, plants and gardens, as well as the aesthetics of garden design. Although cutting grass and trimming hedges is part of this job, there is much more to it than that. **Game Design Note**: Strange as it might sound, we ran a couple characters with this occupation in several play tests and it was fun to play.

Occupational Skills: Automobile (+10%), Botany (+10%), Gardening (+24%), General Repair & Maintenance (+10%), Identify Plants and Fruit (+30%), Land Navigation (+12%), Masonry or Whittling (+10%), Physical Labor or Climb (+10%), and Rope Works (+15%).

Elective Skills: Select six from the standard available categories, but the character gets a +10% bonus to Domestic, Medical

(Brewing and Holistic Medicine only), Technical and Wilderness skills.

Secondary Skills Available: Select seven from the standard available categories.

Pay in the Old World: Varied with the level of success and experience, but was generally good.

Pay in the New World: Barter for services rendered. The ability to maintain or repair equipment is always in demand, as are people who can grow and maintain crops, fruit trees, etc. A strong back can usually find some kind of work for food, room and board, or a fair share in community resources. May have other useful skills.

**50-51% Medicine: Medical Doctor.** A highly skilled professional healer. May have been a general practitioner, surgeon, specialist or researcher.

Occupational Skills: Automobile (+4%), Advanced Math (+12%), Biology (20%), Chemistry (+15%), Computer Operation (15%), Medical Doctor (+20%), Pathology (+20%), Technical Writing (+25%), and Toxicology (+20%).

Elective Skills: Select ten from the standard available categories, but the character gets a +15% bonus to Medical, Science, and Technical skills.

Secondary Skills Available: Select five from the standard available categories.

Pay in the Old World: Varied with the level of success, experience and reputation; generally very good to excellent.

Pay in the New World: Barter for services rendered. Doctors, nurses and other healers are always in demand! May have other useful skills.

**52-53% Medicine: Paramedic.** A high stress job that didn't always get the respect it deserved. The character is skilled in basic medicine and first aid, and knows how to prep and stabilize patients in the field for more extensive medical treatment, as well as administer first aid and basic medical treatment. A paramedic may have been employed by a fire and rescue unit, hospital, fire department, military or private ambulance service.

Occupational Skills: Automobile (+20%; including ambulance), Automobile Mechanics or Basic Mechanics (+15%), Body Building or Aerobic Athletics, Combat Driving, Computer Operation (15%), Paramedic (+20%), Radio: Basic (+10%), Roadwise (+30%), Sensory Equipment (+20%) and Truck (+26%).

Elective Skills: Select six from the standard available categories, but the character gets a +10% bonus to Domestic, Medical, Science, Technical and Transportation skills.

Secondary Skills Available: Select six from the standard available categories.

Pay in the Old World: Varied with the level of success and experience; generally good to very good.

Pay in the New World: Barter for services rendered. Paramedics, nurses and other healers are always in demand. Furthermore, this character's driving abilities may have value.

**54-55% Medicine: Psychiatrist/Psychologist.** A doctor specializing in mental illness, personality disorders, stress, anxiety, and the therapy and other treatments to alleviate the problems.

The main difference between the two professions is a psychologist is a therapist and cannot usually prescribe medicine, and a psychiatrist has a stronger medical background and can prescribe medication (has the Chemistry: Pharmaceutical skill and may be an M.D.). Both are highly skilled professionals.

Occupational Skills: Anthropology (+20%), Biology (+10%), Chemistry (+10%), Chemistry: Pharmaceutical (+20%), Research (+15%), Computer Operation (+10%), Lore: Zombies (+2%), Lore of choice (+15%), Psychology (+25%), Technical Writing (+20%), and Toxicology (+20%).

Elective Skills: Select nine from the standard available categories plus any Medical skill, and the character gets a +15% bonus on Medical and Science skills, and +5% on Communications, and Technical skills.

Secondary Skills Available: Select four from the standard available categories.

Pay in the Old World: Varied with the level of success, experience and reputation; generally very good to excellent.

Pay in the New World: Barter for services rendered. Doctors who can prescribe medication (Psychiatrists) and can help people cope with the horrors of the Zombie Apocalypse are always in demand. May have other useful skills.

**56-57% Medicine: Veterinarian.** A skilled professional healer of animals; primarily domesticated animals from cats, dogs and house pets to horses and livestock.

Occupational Skills: Animal Husbandry (+20%), Biology (+15%), Breed Dogs (+15%), First Aid (+20%), Toxicology (+10%), Veterinary Science (+20%), and Zoology (+15%).

Elective Skills: Select ten from the standard available categories, but the character gets a +10% bonus to Horsemanship, Medical, Science and Wilderness skills.

Secondary Skills Available: Select four from the standard available categories.

Pay in the Old World: Varied with the level of success, experience and reputation; generally very good.

Pay in the New World: Barter for services rendered. Doctors who can treat and heal animals are in high demand. May have other useful skills.

**Military Note:** Professions from the military are not presented for *Ordinary People* because there is a **Soldier O.C.C.** as well as a few other combat oriented O.C.C.s. Also see Police occupations that follow.

**58-59% Police Officer, Beat Cop, Patrol Car Officer.** This is your average police officer who served and protected the citizens and responded to reports of criminal activity, violence and suspicious goings-on before the crash of civilization.

Occupational Skills: Automobile or Motorcycle (+12%), Body Building or Athletics (General), Combat Driving, Hand to Hand: Expert, Law (+25%), Military Etiquette (+10%), Radio: Basic (+15%), Running, Streetwise (+20%), W.P. Blunt, and W.P. Handguns.

Elective Skills: Select seven total from the standard available categories, but the character gets a +10% bonus on Communications, Physical, Technical and Transportation skills. **Note:** May also select any or all of the following skills as an Elective: De-



tect Ambush (+10%), First Aid (+15%), Recognize Weapon Quality (+10%), and Roadwise (+5%).

Secondary Skills Available: Select four from the standard available categories at level one, plus one at levels 3, 6, 9 and 12.

Special Bonuses: +2 to pull punch and +1 to roll with impact.

Pay in the Old World: Varied with the level of success and experience, but was generally good to very good.

Pay in the New World: Barter for services rendered. This character is likely to have kept his dedication to help people and uses his training as a scout, search and rescue, protector/defender, or zombie slayer, but could also be a civic leader in haven communities. May have other useful skills.

**60-61% Police Detective/Crime Scene Investigator:** An experienced police officer trained in crime scene investigative techniques and surveillance.

Occupational Skills: Automobile (+8%), Body Building or Athletics (General), Combat Driving, Crime Scene Investigation (+15%), Hand to Hand: Expert, Intelligence (+12%), Interrogation (+15%), Law (+25%), Military Etiquette (+10%), Radio: Basic (+15%), Running, Streetwise (+10%), Surveillance (+15%), W.P. Blunt, W.P. Handguns and W.P. Shotgun or Rifles.

Elective Skills: Select six total from the standard available categories, but the character gets a +10% bonus on Communications, Physical, Technical and Transportation skills.

Secondary Skills Available: Select two from the standard available categories at levels 1, 4, 8, and 12.

Special Bonuses: +1 on Perception Rolls and +2 to pull punch.

Pay in the Old World: Varied with the level of success and experience, but was generally good to very good.

Pay in the New World: Barter for services rendered. This character is likely to have kept his dedication to help people and uses his training as a scout, search and rescue, protector/defender, or zombie slayer, but could also be a civic leader in haven communities. May have other useful skills.

**62-64% Police Undercover Officer/Surveillance Specialist.** A detective who specializes in surveillance and undercover operations, stings and infiltration.

Occupational Skills: Automobile (+8%), Body Building or Running, Electronic Countermeasures (+15%), Hand to Hand: Expert, Intelligence (+12%), Interrogation or Seduction (+15%), Law (+20%), I.D. Undercover Agent (+10%), Military Etiquette (+10%), Performance (+15%), Radio: Basic (+15%), Streetwise (+12%), Surveillance (+20%), Undercover Ops (+20%), W.P. Blunt and W.P. Handguns.

Elective Skills: Select six total from the standard available categories plus Espionage and Rogue at +10%, but the character also gets a +10% bonus on Communications, Physical, and Technical skills.

Secondary Skills Available: Select two from the standard available categories at levels 1, 4, 8, and 12.

Special Bonuses: +2 on Perception Rolls and +1 to pull punch.

Pay in the Old World: Varied with the level of success and experience, but was generally good to very good.

Pay in the New World: Barter for services rendered. This character is likely to have kept his dedication to help people and uses his training as a scout, search and rescue, protector/defender, or zombie slayer, but could also be a civic leader in haven communities. May have other useful skills.

**65-66% Police Tactical Assault/SWAT.** This individual was trained to be a *commando* style combat specialist for the Police Department. He dealt with barricaded gunmen, terrorists, hostage situations, bomb disposal and other extraordinary circumstances.

Occupational Skills: Automobile (+10%), Climb (+20%), Demolitions (+20%), Demolitions Disposal (+20%), Detect Ambush (+15%), Hand to Hand: Commando or Martial Arts, Law (+15%), Military Etiquette (+15%), Prowl (+10%), Radio: Basic (+15%), Running, Sign Language (military; +20%), Tracking (+15%), W.P. Handguns, W.P. Rifles, W.P. Shotgun, and W.P. Heavy Military Weapons.

Elective Skills: Select five total from the standard available categories plus any Electrical, Mechanical, and Military skills, all with a +10% bonus skills.

Secondary Skills Available: Select two from the standard available categories at levels 1, 3, 7 and 12.

Special Bonuses: +2 to strike with modern weapons/guns, +1 to pull punch and +1 to roll with impact.

Pay in the Old World: Varied with the level of success and experience, but was generally good to very good.

Pay in the New World: Barter for services rendered. This character is likely to earn his keep with his dedication to help people and blazing guns as a protector/defender, but could also be a scout or zombie killer. May have other useful skills.

**67-70% Private Detective/Private Eye.** A professional detective is skilled at tracking down people and information, surveillance and security operations.

Occupational Skills: Automobile or Motorcycle (+6%), Basic Electronics (+10%), Computer Operation (+15%), Crime Scene Investigation (+15%), Hand to Hand: Expert, Photography (+15%), Research (+15%), Roadwise or Streetwise (+20%), Safe-Cracking or Find Contraband (+15%), Surveillance (+20%), Tracking (+10%), Undercover Ops (+15%) and W.P. Handguns.

Elective Skills: Select six total from the standard available categories plus Espionage and Rogue, but the character gets a +10% bonus on Communications, Espionage and Rogue skills, and +5% on Technical skills.

Secondary Skills Available: Select four from the standard available categories.

Special Skill Bonus: +1 on Perception Rolls.

Pay in the Old World: Varied with the level of success and experience, but was generally good to very good.

Pay in the New World: Barter for services rendered. This character is likely to earn his keep as a protector/defender, scout or scavenger. May have other useful skills.

**71-75% Professional Driver.** The character made a living driving one or more different types of small vehicles such as a taxi/car, limousine, pickup truck, delivery truck, moving truck, bus or even race cars for a living. Does not drive the big semis or construction vehicles.

Occupational Skills: Automobile (+16%), Automotive Mechanics (+10%), Combat Driving, Physical Labor, Radio: Basic (+10%), Roadwise (+16%), Truck (+12%), W.P. Blunt, and three Transportation skills of choice, each at +10%.

Elective Skills: Select seven total from the standard available categories plus Rogue, but the character gets a +5% bonus on Domestic, Technical and Transportation skills.

Secondary Skills Available: Select five from the standard available categories at level one, +1 additional skill at levels 4, 8, and 12.

Pay in the Old World: Varied with the level of success, experience and reputation, and was generally good to very good.

Pay in the New World: Barter for services rendered. The ability to expertly drive, maintain and repair vehicles is always in demand. This occupation could also find work as a delivery person, messenger, and scout. May have other useful skills.

**76-80% Professional Driver: Big Rigs.** The character made a living driving all kinds of trucks, but specialized in driving the “Big Rigs” – semi-trucks and trailers, and other large cargo haulers.

Occupational Skills: Automobile (+10%), Automotive Mechanics (+5%), Combat Driving, Hand to Hand: Basic, Land Navigation (+12%), Physical Labor, Radio: Basic (+10%), Roadwise (+12%), Streetwise (+6%), Truck (+22%), W.P. Blunt, and two Transportation skills of choice, each at +14%.

Elective Skills: Select six total from the standard available categories plus Rogue, but the character gets a +5% bonus on Domestic, Physical, Technical and Transportation skills.

Secondary Skills Available: Select five from the standard available categories at level one, +1 additional skill at levels 4, 8, and 12.

Pay in the Old World: Varied with the level of success, experience and reputation, and was generally good to very good.

Pay in the New World: Barter for services rendered. The ability to expertly drive big trucks, maintain and repair vehicles is always in demand. This occupation could also find work as a delivery person, messenger, and scout. May have other useful skills.

**81-84% Professional Driver: Specialized.** The character made a living driving all kinds of heavy trucks, construction and specialized tracked vehicles, including dump trucks, steam shovels, tractors, etc. or was an *aircraft pilot*.

Occupational Skills: Automobile (+10%), Automotive Mechanics (+15%), Basic Electronics (+10%), Basic Mechanics (+10%), Excavation (+10%), Land Navigation (+12%), Physical Labor, Radio: Basic (+10%), Roadwise (+14%), Streetwise (+6%), Tracked Vehicles (+20%), Truck (+12%), Vehicle Armorer (+10%), W.P. Blunt, and one Transportation skill of choice at +14%. **Note:** If an aircraft pilot, change Automobile Mechanics to *Aircraft Mechanics*, Tracked Vehicles to *Aircraft: Jet or Helicopter*, and Truck to *Aircraft: Propeller Types*.

Elective Skills: Select six total from the standard available categories plus Rogue, but the character gets a +10% bonus on Domestic, Mechanical, Technical and Transportation skills.

Secondary Skills Available: Select five from the standard available categories at level one, +1 additional skill at levels 4, 8, and 12.

Pay in the Old World: Varied with the level of success, experience and reputation, and was generally good to very good.

Pay in the New World: Barter for services rendered. The ability to expertly drive specialty vehicles or aircraft, as well as maintain and repair vehicles is always in demand. This occupation could also find work as a delivery person, messenger, and scout. May have other useful skills.

**Psychiatrist/Psychologist.** See *Medical* for this occupation.

**85-88% Scholar/University Professor/Scientist.** Basically any highly educated and skilled academic profession. May have taught on the high school or university level, or was a skilled technician or laboratory assistant, or may have been involved in research and development, and similar fields.

Occupational Skills: Computer Operation (+20%), Creative or Technical Writing (+20%), Cryptography (+20%), History (+15%), Language: Other (spoken; +15%), Literacy: Other Language (written; +20%), Research (+25%), Public Speaking (+15%), Wardrobe & Grooming (+10%), and four skills all selected from *one* of the following categories: Communications, Electrical, Mechanical, Medical, Science or Wilderness at +20% (the scholar’s area of expertise).

Elective Skills: Select seven total from the standard available categories plus Electrical, Mechanical and Science, but the character gets a +10% bonus on Domestic, Communications, Electrical, Mechanical, Science and Technical skills.

Secondary Skills Available: Select two from the standard available categories at levels 1, 3, 7, 11, and 14.

Special Bonus: An additional +10% on any one skill; the character’s area of expertise or an area of special interest.

Pay in the Old World: Varied with the level of success, experience and reputation; generally good to very good.

Pay in the New World: Barter for services rendered. Scholars and scientists may find work as consultants, teachers and assistants to medical personnel, as well as scout, scavenger, or general help and labor. A strong back can usually find some kind of work for food, room and board, or a fair share in community resources. May have other useful skills.



**89-91 Store: Clerk/Sales.** This character made a living stocking shelves, sorting stock, doing inventory, waiting on customers and handling sales. Has a background in operating cash registers and computers.

Occupational Skills: Automobile (+6%), Bicycle (+6%), Barter (+15%), Housekeeping (+10%), Computer Operation (+10%), Physical Labor or Aerobic Athletics, Public Speaking (+5%), Recycling (+10%), and Wardrobe & Grooming (+10%).

Elective Skills: Select eight total from the standard available categories, but the character gets a +5% bonus on Communications, Domestic, and Technical skills.

Secondary Skills Available: Select four from the standard available categories.

Bonus: +1 to M.A. attribute.

Pay in the Old World: Varied with the level of success and experience, but was generally good.

Pay in the New World: Barter for services rendered. This character is likely to earn his keep as a trader, scavenger, or general laborer. May have other useful skills.

**92-93% Store: Retailer.** This character made a living managing or owning and running his or her own retail business; brick and mortar store. Suitable for NPC (Non-Player Character) villains as well.

Occupational Skills: Automobile (+6%), Barter (+20%), Business & Finance Housekeeping (+20%), Computer Operation (+10%), Computer Programming (+5%), Public Speaking (+10%), Recognize Weapon Quality (+15%), Recycling (+10%), Research (+15%), and Wardrobe & Grooming (+15%).

Elective Skills: Select eight total from the standard available categories, but the character gets a +5% bonus on Communications, Domestic, and Technical skills.

Secondary Skills Available: Select four from the standard available categories.

Bonus: +1D4 to M.A. attribute, +4% Literacy: Native Language and +6% to Math: Basic (common skill).

Pay in the Old World: Varied with the level of success and experience, but was generally good to very good.

Pay in the New World: Barter for services rendered. This character is likely to earn his keep as a trader or scavenger who goes into cities and towns to find tradeable goods and necessities. Those established in haven communities might work at or run a store. Knows a good deal and opportunity when he/she sees it. May have other useful skills.

**94-95% Student: College:** This character is probably under the age of 25, had not yet selected a profession, and was studying various subjects in college when the Wave struck.

Occupational Skills: Basic Mechanics or First Aid (+10%), Business and Finance or History (+10%), Computer Operation (+20%), Computer Programming (+10%), Creative or Technical Writing (+10%), Fencing or Swimming (+15%), Kick Boxing or General Athletics, Language: Other (+15%), Philosophy (+10%), Play Musical Instrument or Dance (+15%), Research (+20%), and W.P. Blunt (W.P. Sword instead, if Fencing was selected).

Elective Skills: Select six total from the standard available categories plus Rogue, but the character gets a +10% bonus on Communications, Domestic, Science and Technical skills.

Secondary Skills Available: Select two from the standard available categories at level one, +1 additional skill at levels 2, 4, 8, and 12.

**96-97% Survivalist, Militia or Weapons Expert:** An individual involved in survival and paramilitary exercises. This individual always knew civilization would fall, but he never expected it to happen like this!

Occupational Skills: Basic Mechanics (+15%), Brewing (+10%), Holistic Medicine, Intelligence (+10%), Interrogation or Detect Ambush (+10%), Military Etiquette (+20%), Munitions Expert (+15%), Radio: Basic (+20%), Tracking (people; +15%), Wilderness Survival (+20%), W.P. Knife or W.P. Blunt, W.P. Handguns, W.P. Rifles, and W.P. Heavy Military Weapons.

Elective Skills: Select five total from the standard available categories plus Military and Mechanical, but the character gets a +10% bonus on Communications, Military, and Wilderness skills.

Secondary Skills Available: Select four from the standard available categories.

Special Bonus: +2 to save vs Horror Factor and has three times the supplies, gear, weapons, and 10x the ammo of a typical Survivor O.C.C. because he was prepared for disaster.

Pay in the Old World: Varied with the level of success and experience, but was generally fair to good.

Pay in the New World: Barter for services rendered. This character is likely to earn his keep as a scout, protector or zombie killer. A mercenary Survivalist may continue to sell/trade his services to people for a price, and a bad guy may victimize other human survivors. Can also use his skills to track, hunt and provide food, and may have other useful skills.

**98-00% Wait Staff or Cook:** Someone who made a living cleaning as a waiter, waitress, maitre d', cook or bartender.

Occupational Skills: Aerobic Athletics, Automobile (+6%), Computer Operation (10%), Brewing (+15%, professional quality), Cook (+20% professional quality), Dance or Sing (+10%), General Repair & Maintenance (+5%), Housekeeping (10%), Recycle (+15%), and Wardrobe & Grooming (+15%).

Elective Skills: Select seven total from the standard available categories, but the character gets a +5% bonus on Domestic, Technical and Wilderness skills. **Note:** May select any or all of the following skills as an Elective Skill: Basic Electronics (+5%), Basic Mechanics (+5%), Brewing: Medicinal (+10%), and First Aid (+10%).

Secondary Skills Available: Select four from the standard available categories.

Special Bonus: +1 to Perception Rolls when dealing with children, cleaning and organizing.

Pay in the Old World: Varied with the level of success, experience and reputation; generally good.

Pay in the New World: Barter for services rendered. There is always work for someone willing to wash and repair clothing and linens, and do manual labor. May have other useful skills.

## The Phone Book

### Your key to finding city resources

Civilization fell so fast that most cities and towns remain standing mostly whole and intact, just as they were when the Wave hit. That means the *Business Telephone Directory* is one of the most valuable tools you can find. It has the addresses of all the places with the potential to have the supplies and resources you might need. Pharmacies, hospitals, medical clinics, medical suppliers, hardware stores, military surplus shops, sporting good stores, gun shops, storage facilities, new and used car dealers, automobile repair, vehicle rental, tool and die shops, supermarkets, shopping malls, bookstores, armories, libraries, museums, you name it, the phone book lists it, complete with address and sometimes an area map. Find one for your city, keep it close and use it.

## Maps & Location Finders

### Your key to navigating cities & towns

With the Internet down and most other forms of communication gone, **paper maps** are important, especially street maps of the city(s) you intend to target for raids and supply runs. Obviously, the newer the map the better, but even old maps are better than nothing. Use a map and a phone book together and the city and key locations are laid out at your fingertips. Maps are great because they are small, light and fold up to fit in your pocket.

Some **Atlases** also have maps of major cities, and certainly provide maps of specific states, provinces and countries, including rivers, lakes, main highways, freeways and thoroughfares. The disadvantage of an Atlas for survivors on the move, is they are usually large, oversized books printed on quality paperstock, which means they are big, bulky and heavy.

**Travel guide books** can also be another good resource, especially for finding small rural communities, parks, forests and other remote places that might provide resources and potential safe havens away from the big cities. Of course, they also have information on cities and communities, and depending on the book, some decent maps of key cities, towns and regions. They also have the advantage of being small and portable. Though usually thick, like a paperback novel, travel guides are usually around the same size and can fit in a large pocket, as well as any kind of backpack, saddle bag, purse, or sack.

All of these valuable items can be found at *bookstores* and *libraries*, unless they've already been scavenged or destroyed by weather or fire. Paper maps of the local areas, and sometimes travel guides, are usually available at *gasoline stations*, *pharmacies*, *travel bureaus*, *tourist souvenir shops*, and sometimes vehicle rental places.

**Zombie Presence and Threat Level:** High as is the case at most places in a city or any urban setting.

## Abandoned Vehicles

I know your first thought about a car or truck is claiming it for transportation. Yes, you can, and we'll talk about that first, but abandoned vehicles offer so much more.



# Notable Resources

This is the *Reaper's Survival Guide*, so I'm only going to focus on what I consider to be the most important resources you need to know. Resources and information that, with a little luck, will help keep you alive.

— Brad Ashley, *Leader of the Reapers*

## You May Be Your Best Resource

In the world after the Zombie Apocalypse, money is literally worth only the paper it is printed on. Gold, gems and jewelry are practically worthless, though there are some who still want them. What has 'real' value are food, clothing, weapons, ammo, bicycles, a reliable motorcycle, fuel, medicine, and the goods, supplies and services you need to stay alive! That includes *skills and knowledge* in areas that people need.

Instead of currency, survivors trade in material goods scavenged from the cities, towns and homes, and services, like doctoring, building, mechanics and the likes. The value of any particular item or service varies greatly from place to place and person to person.

**Your skills may be a valuable asset.** You may be able to trade your skills and abilities to provide a service in exchange for foods, a place to sleep, and other things you need and want. Folks who can heal, build, make repairs to vehicles, power up generators, sew, fight and provide other services vital to survival are in high demand, with doctors, nurses, veterinarians, mechanics, mechanical engineers, electricians, hunters, farmers, butchers and carpenters, all at the top of the list.

(**Note:** The Game Master needs to keep the basic principles of "supply and demand" in mind when handling the trading of goods and services.)



While motorcycles have become one of the primary modes of transportation for the Reapers, other vehicles are viable alternatives for many survivors. **Cars**, as in your typical sedan, are, for the most part, *useless* as a means to get around. They lack the protection and strength needed to survive a zombie attack, are easily blocked by debris and other vehicles, are big, and do *not* do well off-road. Cars may be more useful in rural areas where zombies are fewer and the roads are less filled with empty hulks blocking your path, but even so, a car's viability is limited these days.

**Cars have other value.** Cars and any vehicle are, however, a great source for *fuel, oil, spare parts* and *equipment*. People who were fleeing the cities may have a back seat or trunk filled with food, bottled water, guns, ammo, blankets, clothing, and other useful supplies. Even vehicles that were not part of the great exodus are likely to have a spare tire, crowbar, tire iron, tire pump, a spare can or two of motor oil, fishing poles and tackle, gym clothes, work clothes, rags, gasoline can (maybe with gas in it), snacks, booze, first aid kit, flares, flashlight, tool kit and other useful items. And don't forget to check the glove compartment and under the seats for hidden treasures. You'd be surprised what people put under their seats.

Just remember, abandoned vehicles can be a death trap. Clusters of cars are often the hiding place for dormant zombies, so be darn careful. Risk is minimal if the vehicle is isolated someplace or there are 3-4 scattered here and there. Risk of the walking dead *skyrockets* when you find a street or parking lot full of cars. And in the city, you should probably be prepared for one in every four vehicles having a zombie inside, under, behind or near it.

**Don't let a car graveyard become your graveyard.** If you have survived this long you should already know this, but it bears repeating: *automobile graveyards* are best to be avoided. I'm talking about lengths of freeways, highways and main arteries filled with hundreds to thousands of cars in one stretch. These seas of vehicles are *always* the hiding place for dormant zombies as well as being frequented by wandering zombies. Trying to navigate an auto graveyard is like trying to make your

way through a narrow maze of *Jack-in-the-boxes* – you never know when a walking dead might 'pop out' of one. Or crawl out from under one. Or lunge at you from behind one. Besides, if you stop and think about it, there are just way too many places where *anyone* or *anything* can be laying in wait in these places. I've seen killer dog packs, wild animals to bandits, lunatics and Retro-Savages lurking in auto graveyards. I know the idea of what each car, truck and big rig might contain inside is a powerful lure, but don't do it. Do not fool yourself into thinking, 'Well, how dangerous can it be if I just check out the ones on the edge of the highway?' That's desperation or greed whispering in your ear. Give these places a wide berth. Trust me on this.

**A vehicle can be a tool or weapon against the walking dead.** If you do come across a car or truck that still runs, it's not a bad idea to stash it someplace where it is easy to access for a quick getaway, or mark it in some way so you can find and recognize it again. A running car can make a good decoy or distraction. Zombies assume if a car is moving and/or has sound coming from it, there must be people inside, and they'll chase it. Even with their ability to see and sense life energy, they'll give chase to an empty vehicle going down the street. That can buy you precious time. Turn on the CD player, throw the vehicle into gear and let it idle down the street to draw zombies away from you. Then, make your move to escape or whatever your plan is.

**A vehicle is not a refuge.** Don't make the mistake of using a vehicle as a place to hole up. The large glass windows break under pressure and leave you stuck like a sardine in a can. Even a large vehicle like a bus or semi-truck and trailer won't last long against a couple hundred zombies, let alone many more. The skin of many semi-trailers is not as tough as you might think. Even a box car, which is as tough as a cargo container comes, has the disadvantage that you can't see out of it and the noise of the monsters pounding on the skin for hours on end will drive a sane man crazy. Besides, sooner or later, you have to come out. The point is, *avoid dead ends* where you can be trapped. That's not a hard and fast rule, but it's true 8 out of 10 times.

**Small Trucks** – as in *pickup trucks, jeeps, SUVs* and *Humvees* – are bigger, stronger, can go off-road (though nothing too crazy) and can haul more stuff than cars. Most still lack sufficient protection against zombie attacks, but can be reinforced with metal grills, bars and plating on all the windows and other surfaces to shore up the defenses. Be sure to grab a *four wheel drive* whenever you can. These types of vehicles let you handle dirt and gravel roads, open fields, and broken road, providing superior flexibility and mobility. On the downside, they are fuel hogs. Be smart, carry extra fuel, motor oil, brake fluid, two spare tires and a tool kit with you at all times. As for tires, just throw an extra one or two on the roof and strap them down. It is better to have a spare and not need it than to be stuck without.

**Cargo Vans** hold a special place in Brick's heart, but I'm not completely sold on them. The Pros: A good cargo van has few windows, multiple entry and exit points, lots of interior storage and plenty of metal to attach window grills and reinforcements. You can put a couple motorcycles or several bicycles and riders in a van and still have room for some storage. You can haul a group of guys or haul a load of scavenged supplies all in the relative safety of a metal box on wheels. In most cases, you are going to leave any vehicle concealed on the edge of town, and go into the city on foot, on a bicycle or on a motorcycle, so in that capacity a van is very good and very versatile.

The Cons: Then again, a van still has front and back windows, the skin of the vehicle is not all that thick, though it should hold up against zombies using their bare fists, even if they turn the van over on its side. Not so much if a Thinker or Death Priest has the monsters using bricks and pipe on the van walls. Vans are not off-road vehicles and have the same road limitations of a car.

**If you are going to use a van, Brick suggests you look for a Chevy Cargo Van with a V8-350.** The Chevy 350 is found in more vehicles on the road than any other single motor design. It

has remained largely unchanged for 30+ years and most parts are interchangeable. It produces a ton of power and is very reliable. *Get a winch.* If you do get stuck, or need to pull something apart, this tool goes a long way to making your life easier.

Here are Brick's combat modifications for vans:

Cut two access hatches in your van, one in the roof and one in the floor. If you ever do get stuck, you can pop one of these hatches and toss out flares or Molotov cocktails to break up the zombie hordes or make a quick escape the walking dead might not notice.

*Spare tires, keep two if you can.*

*Find a hand-cranking fluid pump.* These are often used on fifty gallon oil drums, or on mobile fuel depots. They are great for harvesting fuel in a hurry, and you are going to need every drop you can find to feed your van and bikes.

Finally, cutting some *kill slots* in the side of the van can be useful. Make sure they open inward so the covering can't pulled or knocked off from the outside. Brick recently modified one of the Reaper's vans with slots just below head height and large enough to stick the blade of a chainsaw out. This is a very gruesome, but effective way to keep zombies off the van. Any flailing body part that gets near that blade comes right off, nothing gets stuck, and it doesn't waste ammo. Just be careful of your fellow passengers and know this is a very messy job.

**Passenger Vans** have too many windows to fortify, forget them.

**Buses** have a lot of windows, don't have off-road capabilities, don't maneuver well, are fuel hogs, and will require fortification for urban use.

**Box Trucks** are the types of trucks used by moving and delivery companies for dropping off and picking up packages. They are everywhere and ideal for large shipments. Problem is, most roads are clogged at some point, trucks don't have off-road



capabilities, they don't maneuver well, they are fuel hogs, and have blind spots.

**Big Trucks and Semis** may have their uses, but they don't apply to small bands of survivors. And even a big truck will get clogged up, stopped or overturned by zombies numbering into the hundreds or thousands. They are also stopped by broken road and roads blocked by other vehicles or debris. And talk about gas hogs.

**The bottom line is every vehicle has its value**, advantages and disadvantages under the right circumstances. Even negative aspects may change to positive features depending on the environment and situation. It is, ultimately, up to *you* to judge what you need at the moment and what works under the current circumstances. Something that sounded like a poor option may suddenly become a godsend or your only chance when you are being mobbed by a throng of zombies. Remember, there are a lot of vehicles out there, so most anything you use should be considered *disposable*.

Most individuals and small bands of survivors need small, fast, mobile transportation, making bicycles, motorcycles and off-road vehicles the way to go.

Large mobile groups and safe haven communities may have a need for a range of large and diverse vehicles from small trucks, vans, and big-rigs to cars, buses, farm and construction vehicles.

## Gasoline Stations

The value of these places is obvious. The problem is, they are usually on the street corner of a main road, out in the open, and any zombie wandering by will see you, moan and have a dinner party surrounding you in one minute flat. That's especially true if you are pulling up in a vehicle at the pumps. It is much safer to come in on foot or bicycle with plastic containers to put the gasoline in and carry out. It is more work, but it's safer. Another problem is the pumps may not work. Most are electronic and computer operated. No power probably means the pumps don't work. That's okay, there is always an access hatch to the massive gas tanks below the concrete, and some pumps have a manual override. Again, the problem is being out in the open on a major thoroughfare where you are going to be scene. Good news is, you should see the walking dead coming for you just as easy. Get in and get out.

Gas stations have other value. Most have basic supplies, food, candy, chewing gum, cigarettes, disposable lighters, beverages, and maps, among other things. Most of the food and beverages are likely to have been plundered or gone bad, but sometimes you get lucky. Speaking of luck, you might find a handgun or sawed-off shotgun behind the counter.

The Zombie Presence & Threat Level: High in urban settings, be it a town or city. Low if it is out in the middle of nowhere.

## Hardware Stores

Need I say more? Most hardware stores, at least in the United States, offer everything from nails, screws, nuts, bolts, locks, chain, rope and batteries to paint, pipe, tools, power tools, and gardening equipment, as well as paper towels, bottled water, basic canned goods, candy, snack foods and Beanie Babies. The

biggest ones also offer lumber, aluminum, furniture, bathtubs, lawn furniture, lighting, propane, kerosene, paint thinner, lamp oil, heaters, generators, cooking grills, lawn mowers (with engines that can be cannibalized for a variety of things), and a larger range of all sorts of hardware.

The Zombie Presence & Threat Level: Low to moderate in most cases. High if located in a downtown area or if you're at one of the big stores and its expansive parking lot is full of cars.

## Heavy Industry & Factories

Many factories and other "heavy" industrial sections of town were up and running during the Wave and when the zombies came to life. Thus, workers fell to invading hordes of walking dead and factories and heavy industrial parks/complexes are inhabited by prowling zombies, though not as dangerous as the streets of most major cities.

Factories offer zombies countless places to hide, including cranes, catwalks and rafters overhead, sunken pits in the floor, and literally tons of machinery, massive bins, pipes and places to hide behind.

To humans, factories offer the same kind of resources as the Shipping Hubs and Airports, everything from common tools, office supplies, first aid kits, work clothes, packing materials, and personal items (in offices and lockers), to food, coffee, bottled water, etc., in the cafeteria/lounge or executive areas, to heavy and specialized tools, cutting/welding torches, gasoline, spare parts and raw materials (sheet metal, aluminum, lumber, plastic, etc.). Game Masters, use common sense and your discretion. **Note:** Factory settings can be lots of fun, because, like Shipping Hubs and Airports, they have a combination of large open buildings, warehouses and floor space to very confined, complex and alien (to the average person) areas filled with all kinds of massive machines, robots, assembly line, etc.

The Zombie Presence & Threat Level: Low in expansive, empty parking lots, test tracks, massive warehouses and grassy fields around them. *Moderate* zombie presence and threat level inside the factory itself. *High* zombie presence and threat level in and around offices, assembly line, heavy machinery, tunnel networks and other dark places (there are lots), basement and office areas, as well as parking structures and parking lots that have numerous vehicles parked in them.

## Light Industrial Parks

### A Potential Resource & Haven

Industrial parks can be a treasure trove when it comes to tools, equipment, supplies, food, clothing, raw materials, vehicles, gasoline, and so on. Every building could hold a cornucopia of vital goods. Of course, the trick is going through the city to get to them.

Most urban communities have numerous industrial parks scattered in and around the city. Light industrial parks are zoned for light manufacturing, shipping and receiving, clerical and professional work. Thus, a light industrial park could have a range of businesses from accounting, computer software company, computer packaging company (builds and ships computers), laboratory, publishing company, distributor (shipping and receiving virtually any type of goods), warehousing (storage,

shipping and receiving for virtually any type of company), truck yard, auto customization and detailing, repair garage, to printing and manufacturing – box maker, clothing manufacturer or other textile operation, tool and die shops, welding shops, parts manufacturer, cabinet builder – and all manner of other light manufacturing, storage, repair work, and business services.

**Each business** will have its own “tools of the trade,” whatever they might be. The range of potential resources includes tools, supplies and machinery to raw materials (lumber, sheet metal, aluminum, plastic, rubber, tires, textiles, paper, boxes, etc.), finished goods (warehouses), parts, electronics and vehicles. In addition, many shops and plants have kitchens, refrigerators, vending machines and supplies such as bottled water, tea, coffee, etc., for the employees. There may also be personal items and supplies in the offices and lockers. Game Masters, use your discretion as to what may be available and where.

**Light industrial parks can also be a safe haven in a city crawling with zombies.** Most industrial parks were closed during the Wave, so people did not die in large numbers at most locations. When the dead rose, people did not flee to industrial parks, they locked themselves up tight in their homes and apartment buildings, or went to public civic buildings, hospitals, schools, churches, police stations, etc. Consequently, the buildings in most light industrial parks were locked up and uninhabited. As such, when the dead rose, they did not go to industrial parks. There was no reason to hunt there, because the industrial parks were devoid of people to prey upon. Furthermore, the streets and parking lots are empty, most of the buildings and manufacturing shops remain locked and whatever is inside them, secure! After all, zombies can sense the presence of life, and with nobody inside the buildings, there was no reason to try to smash through even glass doors to get in. Abandoned industrial parks are also quiet, so zombies are not attracted to them.

Zombie Presence and Threat Level: Low to moderate.

That having been said, zombies *do* wander and reside in industrial parks, especially in buildings that are open (probably a company with a late shift or around-the-clock operations working when the dead rose), as well as lurk in parking lots with cars or trucks, under and behind dumpsters, in truck wells, behind shrubbery or debris, and so on. **WARNING:** Without ground maintenance, the lawns around the buildings are turning into fields of tall grass, weeds and wildflowers that can easily conceal the undead, especially *Crawlers*, predators and other dangers. Zombies may also follow humans into an industrial park and once there, wander around for hours or even days looking for human prey. Likewise, once a building is obviously left open, zombies, human survivors, bandits and wild animals may enter and make it their nest, lair or hiding place.

## Museums

From a practical point of view, museums, particularly art and historical museums, are excellent resources for ancient weapons such as swords, battle axes, maces, and pole arms, as well as armor and common tools, restoration tools, woodworking tools, crowbars, paint, varnish, glues, cleansers, fine art, paint brushes, tape, rope, string, box cutters, duct tape, crates and shipping materials, and other equipment used for restoration, building exhibits, etc. **Note:** Most people don't know it, but most museums

display less than 25% of what they actually own. The rest is stored in the basement and other archival rooms hidden from the public. As a result, many museums have one or more sub-levels below the last floor open to the public.

*A museum gift shop* may also have city and regional maps, atlases, and travel guides, as well as How To books. Many museums also have a cafeteria which could hold eating and cooking utensils, knives, meat cleavers, and food supplies (grain, sugar, canned goods, etc.).

From a more aesthetic (or greedy) point of view, museums also contain countless works of art from paintings and sculptures to jewelry and historic artifacts.

Zombie Presence and Threat Level: Low for the museums itself. Most museums are large, sprawling buildings and most were closed during the Wave. However, museums are typically located in a downtown area where the threat is high.

## Oases in the City

### Temporary Safe Havens

While not a “resource” in the sense of a place to get supplies, there are some common locations in every city where people may be able to escape zombies or find a momentary haven to regroup, hide or rest for awhile. One is **light industrial parks**, described previously, others include *sports stadiums, arenas, auditoriums, playing fields, parks* and *cemeteries*.

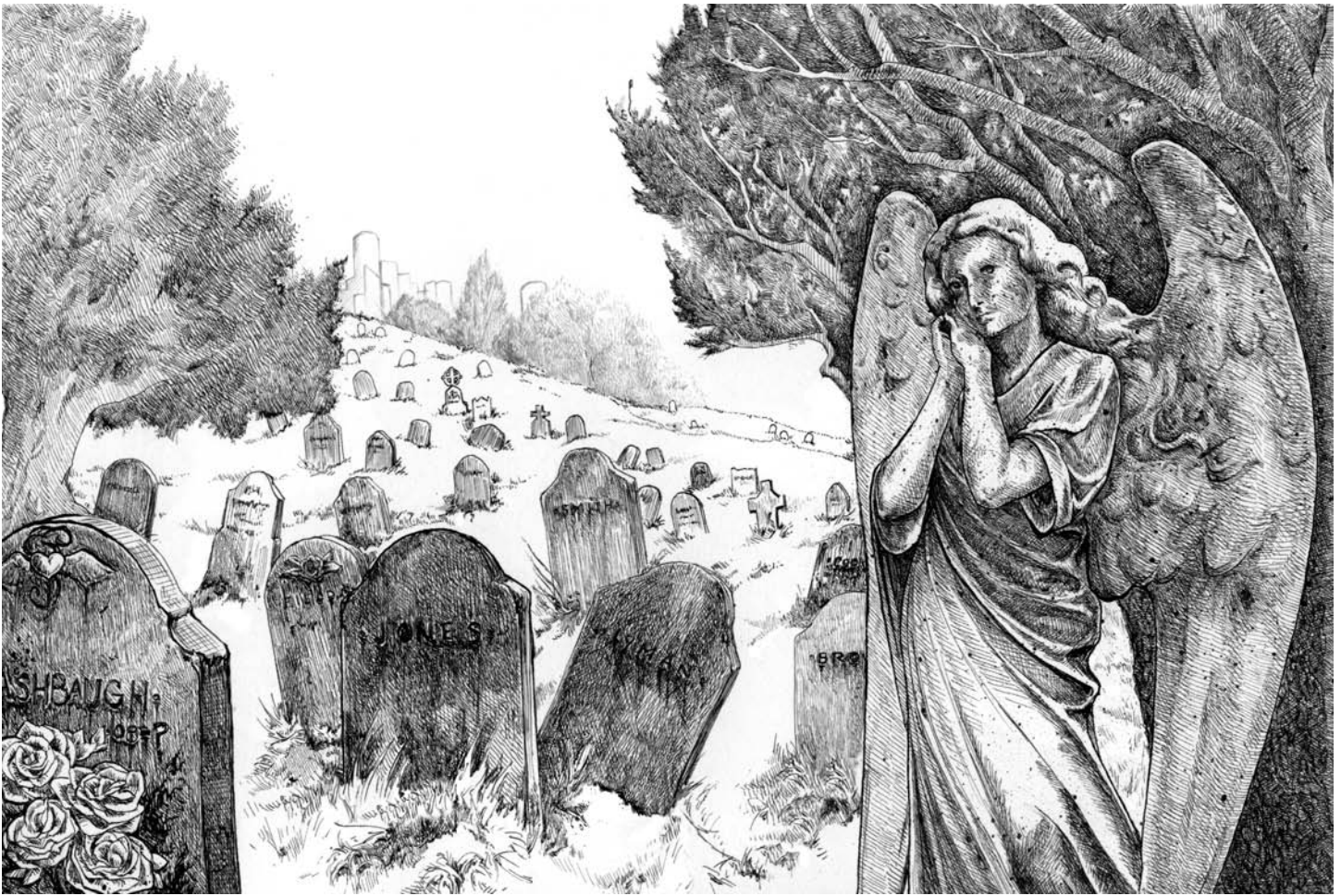
Nobody lives in these places, few people visit them, and they are quiet, open, and empty, making them lousy places for zombies to seek prey or hide. As a result, the walking dead tend to avoid these locations. No prey, no place to hide or go dormant, no reason to be there. This makes cemeteries, parks and even stadiums ideal locations to stash supplies, hide a motorcycle or bicycle, regroup, lay low, make camp, rest or recuperate for a while. Of course, *no place* in the city is completely safe, or safe for long, so it is best to use such an oasis for a short while; 1D4 hours, overnight maximum. Actually, night stays are not a good idea, because the aura of the living shines like a beacon and can be seen for a mile in truly open areas.

**Stadiums and similar structures.** Although sports stadiums, arenas, playing fields and auditoriums were used as gathering places and makeshift field hospitals during the Wave, when the dead reanimated and the killing started, the living either fled or died there. When the slain rose as zombies they joined their undead brethren and spread out, away from the stadiums where they were born, to find prey in the city all around them. Consequently, once abandoned, there was little reason to go back to these places, especially the big open areas of the court, playing field and open stadium seating.

Zombie Presence and Threat Level: Low to moderate. Low on the open court, playing field, stadium seating and wide, empty hallways to the seating. These locations are usually empty or occupied by a few dormant zombies scattered across a large area.

Moderate presence and threat level in the dark inner offices, locker rooms, showers, box seats, restaurants, and parking areas filled with vehicles (empty parking lots are low risk).

**Cemeteries/graveyards.** Believe it or not, cemeteries, especially large ones, are often devoid of zombies or inhabited by a



comparative few of them. Remember, it was not the dead and buried that rose as zombies, but the *recent dead* killed by the Wave and other zombies. To the walking dead, cemeteries are big, quiet, empty, open places like parks and stadiums. Nobody lives in a cemetery and few people visit them anymore, so they are lousy places to hunt for human prey. This makes cemeteries (parks and even stadiums) ideal locations to stash supplies, hide a motorcycle or bicycle, regroup, make camp, or rest and recuperate for a while. Old cemeteries with tombstones and decorative statuary are good places to hold one's ground in a battle against zombies too, as the tombstones, statues, and mausoleums all make good cover and provide places to duck behind, hide and lose zombie pursuers.

Zombie Presence and Threat Level: Low at cemeteries.

**Crematoriums.** All the real dead people are in vaults six feet under or locked in a box in the crematorium. The surroundings generally consist of wide open fields so you can see things coming and the crematorium is generally a brick or cinder block building with heavy metal doors easy to fortify as they don't have many windows. Also, most crematorium furnaces run on natural gas and more often than not, are still working. A great way to dispose of zombies.

**Parks.** Zombie instincts lead the undead away from large open spaces in favor of narrow streets, buildings, houses, tunnels and places a) where human prey is more likely to be encountered, and b) which offer many places to hide/lay in wait. This is especially true of large parks and long expanses of city parkways. For example, in the Metro Detroit area that would in-

clude *Hines Drive*, a park that snakes and winds for 10 miles (16 km), *Belle Isle*, and the *Rouge River Park* expanse. Consequently, while one to a dozen zombies many wander through a city park at any time, or follow prey into the park, they are not likely to linger there for long. To a zombie, parks are too open and remote. It's plain and simple: Quiet, open, uninhabited (no food/prey) = no reason to be there.

**State Campgrounds and farmland** might as well be wild woodlands as far as zombies are concerned, even though the towns and cities around them are often less than 10 miles (16 km) away.

Zombie Presence and Threat Level: Low at parks. There are some exceptions. Tiny parks and playgrounds like those at schools are too small to be considered open or remote. The park must be at least the equivalent of a city block or several blocks to miles long. *Central Park* in New York city is large, but there are so many zombies in the city, and so many bridges, boulders, hills, trees, shrubs and park benches where a zombie can hide, that Central Park has a moderate to high zombie presence and threat level. Likewise, if a park is the site of frequent human activity, it stops being *remote and empty* and turns into a hunting ground for the walking dead. Game Masters, use common sense and your own discretion.

*When zombies are encountered at a typical park* they are likely to have been wandering through or dormant behind trees with thick trunks, dense, tall foliage, a garbage can, toilet facility, supply hut, shack, or abandoned vehicle. They may also be found under piles of leaves, garbage, or debris, and sometimes

under a park bench, picnic table or in a playground area – all places where humans are more likely to be found or where a zombie can find cover to hide.

**Police Stations.** Yeah, the zombies sprung up at police stations and other government buildings, but by now, most of them have been abandoned. Sure, there may be zombies inside, but not as many as some buildings. And you have to give it to the cops, they made most police stations just as hard to get into as they made their jails to get out of. Most stations have been cleaned out of weapons, ammo and gear by now, but sometimes you hit the jackpot, just don't plan on finding any weapons or useful gear. The jail cells are still there and that may have some value, and with very little work, you can barricade the doors and make a nice place to hole up for a little while – a few hours or a day. Not any longer, you'd be surprised at how many survivors, scavengers and bandits still come to police stations looking for weapons and ammo. Oh, and be sure to check all the jail cells, sometimes there are leftovers still moaning in them.

**Note:** Also see *Light Industrial Parks*.

## Pawnshops

*Pawnshops* are easy to find, every older city has at least three or four, many have more than that. Most are well fortified to start with, contain an arsenal of secondhand weapons and goods, including knives, tools, electronics, and other equipment, along with timepieces and jewelry.

*Antique and secondhand shops* may also offer a range of useable goods and tools, especially the low-end stores that are more like a mini-flea market than an upscale store. Here you might find sickles and garden tools to collectible knives and even the occasional sword or firearm. Upscale antique shops are likely to mainly offer furniture, but may also have military memorabilia and collectible knives, swords, and guns.

The Zombie Presence & Threat Level: High. Most Pawn shops and even resale and antique shops are located in the downtown area or shopping district of the city or town. Even if in the bad part of town, a pawn shop will be in a what was once a heavily populated area. Be careful.

## Pharmacies

Pharmacies are a treasure trove. Every city has numerous pharmacies – 1D8+2 of them within a five mile radius in most suburban cities throughout the United States. In some cases, a rival pharmacy is located across the street or down the block from one another. That's a lot of places to find over the counter drugs, vitamins, and prescription medication, antibiotics, painkillers, and an array of other drugs, medicine and medicine supplies (Band-Aids, bandages, thermometers, heating pads, water bottles, reading glasses, canes, walkers, lotions, ointments, etc.). Most also offer an array of soaps, shampoos, and other hygiene products, makeup, disposable cameras (film and digital), basic office supplies (note pads, pens, markers, crayons, chalk, scissors, paper clips, etc.), a small selection of food and canned goods, as well as candy, snack foods, soda pop and beverages, books and magazines, greeting cards, and other items. How to find one? Your Yellow Pages business directory!

Zombie Presence and Threat Level: Moderate. Typically a medium sized, stand alone building with a small parking lot around it.

**The same is true of the big 'everything chain stores.'** You know the ones I'm talking about. Hell, many of them even have a *pharmacy* inside them – a hardware, garden, pet, toy, bicycle, clothing, and grocery section too, among other things. These big stores are extremely dangerous because they are likely to have an expansive parking lot that has become an automobile graveyard with a hundred or more zombies in it, plus there is likely to be another hundred or two walking dead lurking inside the place. All those aisles, racks, counters and displays gives the dead plenty of places to hide or ambush a visitor. Be careful. Personally, I avoid the big box stores. Just too dangerous for my taste, and it's my job to kill the walking dead.

Zombie Presence and Threat Level: High to extremely high.

## Shipping Facilities: Postal or Package Delivery

Every city and town has at least one *United States Post Office*, *FedEx office*, *UPS facility* and/or other package shipping company facilities; large cities will have several of each. All are potential resources for valuable supplies, tools, containers, cartons, sacks, and more.

**The small, local, post offices and other package shippers,** where packages are dropped off by customers and collected for shipping to processing centers, are a resource for tools and tool kits, crowbars, box cutters, scissors, tape, duct tape, string, rope, markers, pens and pencils, note pads, paper, vinyl and cloth sacks (by the hundreds, even thousands at major hubs), sturdy carrying bins (by the hundreds to thousands), boxes (also by the hundreds to thousands), 1D4 first aid kits, carts, pallets, forklifts, employee vehicles, maps, work uniforms and more. Personal items left in lockers and offices may include pocket calculators, batteries, alcohol, bottled water, soda, articles of clothing, maps and other odds and ends that may be useful.

Zombie Presence and Threat Level: High as is the case at most places in a city or any urban setting.

**Processing center/large shipping facilities** where the packages are sent to be sorted and shipped out to central hubs. Most are designed to operate around the clock, 24/7, or at least have a morning and afternoon shift.

They are a resource for all the above in much greater quantities, plus 3D6+18 delivery trucks, 1D6+6 large semi-trucks and trailers, spare tires, extra vehicle parts, vehicle supplies (motor oil, brake fluid, etc.), private gasoline tanks, a wider range of tools and number of tool kits, heavier crowbars, numerous first aid kits, carts, pallets, forklifts, maps, work uniforms, and more.

Zombie Presence and Threat Level: High as is the case at most places in a city or any urban setting.

**The major hubs/shipping facilities.** This is where you'll find all of the above, plus the company's regional fleet of 3D6+14 semi-trucks and trailers, a much wider selection and number of tools and full tool kits (5D6+30), larger and heavy tools, different weights of hammers, wrenches, sockets, hacksaws, zip saws, rivet guns, air compressors and air tools, numerous cutting/welding torches, electric and acetylene gas cutting/



welding torches, wire, sheet metal, rivets, bolts, straps and belts, backup generators (not portable), gasoline pumps (above ground tanks, and possibly 1D4 portable units that hold 100 gallons and can be hitched to a truck), possibly one tow truck (50% chance), and parts for trucks.

Zombie Presence and Threat Level: High as is the case at most places in a city or any urban setting.

**Sort Facility/Out Station** is a massive, fenced in warehouse/loading dock and airfield, that is usually part of a larger, commercial airport located at key or “hub” cities. In some circumstances (about 10%), the shipper’s airfield is private (for example, UPS has its own airfield in Rockford, Illinois). Out Stations have all the resources listed above in greater quantities as well as the following: 2D6+12 semi-trucks (x3 at a major hub) at any time, spare parts, spare tires, tools for aircraft, 60 ton hydraulic jacks, drills, 2D4 wheeled portable generators with lights and electrical outlets, plenty of winter gear (boots, gloves, jackets, overalls, etc.), latex gloves, protective breathing equipment (PBEs; air filters, gas masks), sheet metal shop and related tools and machinery, grinders, sanders, cutters (capable of making almost anything), supplies of thin aircraft aluminum (4x8 foot and 6x12 foot sheets), gasoline pumps, 1D6 gasoline tanker trucks, 2D6+4 portable gasoline tank units (holds 100 gallons and can be hitched to a truck), 1D4+1 tow trucks, parts for trucks, 1D4+1 cargo aircraft. **Note:** UPS has 250 airplanes, the seventh largest air fleet in the world; Atlanta, Louisville, and Denver are among its major hubs.

The Zombie Presence & Threat Level: Low compared to most places. These shipping facilities and airstrips are big, sprawling places usually located on the edge of an urban area. The vast, flat open land occupied by airstrips, runways, tarmacs, and the grassy fields around them is not conducive to zombies, so they are usually not occupied by many. This makes the open areas good places to flee from zombies and make good an escape.

Moderate zombie presence and threat level in and around abandoned vehicles, aircraft, the control tower, hangars, loading docks, warehouses and other buildings.

High zombie presence and threat level in the parking lots.

## Shipping/Transit Facility Airports

Effectively the same as the *Major Hub* of the **Postal & Package Shipping Facilities**, described previously, with each airline having its own hangars and maintenance, repair areas.

**In addition, there will be the resources of the airport terminal** itself with its restaurants, stores, lounge areas, ticket booths, and offices. Souvenir shops, bookstores and magazine racks may have maps and tourist guides of the region, while other shops may offer over the counter pharmaceuticals, food, candy, and basic items for travel, while some may have clothing and other things. *Security* may have 2D6+6 walkie talkies, 1D4+4 sensor wands, 2D4+8 nightstick/billy clubs, 2D8+4 .38 revolvers, a couple 9mm pistols, 1D4 shotguns, 1D4 assault rifles, 1D4 boxes of ammunition for each type of weapon, 3D6+18 flares, 1D4+4 pairs of handcuffs, a bag of 96 plastic hand restraints, uniforms, 1D4+1 first aid-kits, 1D4 portable defibrillators, 1D4 wheelchairs, 1D4 oxygen tanks, and other odds and ends.

The Zombie Presence & Threat Level: Low in the large open areas such as airstrips, tarmacs, runways and the grassy fields around them. This makes the open areas good places to flee from zombies, make good an escape or make a pitched battle.

Moderate zombie presence and threat level in and around abandoned vehicles, aircraft, control towers, hangars and storage/supply buildings.

High zombie presence and threat level in airline terminals, especially the waiting areas and concourse where the shops are, and luggage pickup, as well as the network of tunnels, conveyor belts and internal offices that the public doesn’t have access to, as well as parking structures, the parking lots, car rental lots, shuttle bus area, and any hotels attached to or near the airport.

## Big City Resources – Go Up

Big cities like Chicago, Manhattan, Boston, Dallas, Las Vegas, and Los Angeles are a different animal than the urban sprawl of suburbia and smaller cities and towns. The big cities have skyscrapers that stretch into the sky. This is a blessing and a curse.

*A blessing* because a single skyscraper is practically like a small town all by itself, only it goes up, not flat across the land. The walking dead on the street below are stupid, too stupid to figure out how to find the stairwell and go up. Too stupid to methodically hit every floor. That means after the first 1-6 floors, you may only have to deal with zombies already in the building. Depending on the building, its function, and timing, it could be practically devoid of walking dead or filled with them. Aside from hospitals, civic and government building where the sick and dead were taken, and apartment buildings where people locked themselves in and prayed, only to be killed by zombies later, half the office buildings are zombie light. The higher you go, the fewer walking dead.

One story in a building is typically 10-12 feet (3-3.6 m). Go up to the third or fourth floor and you are out of the sensing range of the zombies on the street. They can’t sense your life energy. Stay out of sight and they don’t know you are there only a few floors above them. This has made the upper levels of tall buildings, and rooftops a sanctuary for the living. Go way up, 20, 30 stories, and several dozen wailing zombies can’t be heard on the street below or even 3-4 floors below.

I’ve seen it a few times: clean out the upper levels of zombies, take measures to keep zombies from gaining access to your upper floors, and the dumb monsters don’t have a clue anybody is there. You don’t even have to be that organized. Just living on the upper floors of office buildings where the multitude on the streets can’t see or sense you, has kept thousands alive. We hear tell of survivors – anywhere from a tiny handful to several hundred – living high up in the tall buildings on a regular basis. Saved our share of them, too. The most I’ve ever seen in a single building has been 169. As a rule, it’s more like a half dozen to a dozen or three. Of course, I’ve never been to New York City or L.A. I can tell you, Chicago and Milwaukee are a mess. There may be people living in some of the tall buildings, but their numbers are small. Nothing in the thousands or tens of thousands like some of the stories starting to circulate. Those are fairy tales born from lies, hope and desperation. Can’t speak with authority about many big cities.

Smaller cities, towns and suburbs that don't have a lot of tall buildings even in their downtown areas are out of luck. Urban sprawl resulted in mostly 1-4 story buildings – low and flat. That's certainly the case of places like Rockford and Carol Stream, Illinois. Probably Detroit and its surrounding townships, too. Damn shame. Who knew we needed to build up, not out?

Like I said, living in the tall buildings is a blessing and a curse. *The curse* is, that life in the clouds is like living on an island. You are isolated from the world below. To resupply you need to come down. Come down where walking dead infest our world. Come down through a tall, dark building without electricity that may not be as empty as you think. Just as the zombies can't see or hear those living on the upper levels and rooftops, neither can the living hear the approach of the dead. You don't know if a band of zombies have moved into the building or what floors they may be on. Hell, there could be a mob of them only a floor or two below you. For that matter, you don't know if bandits, cultists or other undesirables have moved in. Not all survivors are good people.

Growing food crops on the rooftop is seasonal in most places, and only goes so far. Besides, you need to get the seeds, the tools, and the water and tend to your crops. How many city folk know how to do that? Do you? I don't.

Roof Dwellers need to find supplies just like the rest of us, and that means navigating the deadly streets of zombie town USA. Only they face all the same problems and dangers that we do x10. Times ten because you are in a "big" city, the most zombie infested place you can be. Once you are street level you are standing in the world of the dead. You better be really smart, really fast and really lucky.

You have the problems of heating and lighting, too. You have to be careful, because fire or lights, even 50 stories high, are obvious from the ground. While Slouchers and Crawlers won't notice, a Thinker, Mock Zombie, cultist or bandit might.

Getting in and out without leading zombies, cultists and other villains to your sanctuary is another problem. Don't forget, Thinkers recognize patterns and can follow trails, as well as tail people from a distance. If a smart zombie realizes people are living inside a tall building, it can lead a horde of walking dead to your upper floor haven or rooftop sanctuary. You lead zombies, human predators or madmen to your rooftop haven and you are in a world of hurt. There's probably only 2-6 ways out of a high-rise dwelling, and a stairwell filled with zombies from the ground floor up isn't going to be one of them. Capische. Likewise, while most zombies are dumb as a brick, Thinkers and Mock Zombies can easily figure out where the stairwell is and how to open doors to other levels. Even if only one or two of the lower floors becomes infested, or if zombies fill the lower levels of the staircase, how do you exit the building? Jump to the neighboring building? Build a pull system to a neighboring building? Do you know what awaits you in the building next door? Will the Thinker realize where you've gone and regroup his zombie brethren to follow you there and attack you on unfamiliar territory?

Zombies aren't your only threat. Well intentioned Survivors, Scavengers and other people may inadvertently lead zombies to your doorstep. They may simply have come to your building to

scavenge supplies, hide, rest or find help, only to bring a horde of zombies on their tail to your home.

The Zombie Presence & Threat Level: Varies greatly. Your highest level of danger is almost always greatest on street level and the first 1-4 floors, and lessens the higher up you go. That's not always the case, but it is more often than not.



## Rural Communities

The rural areas outside the cities and even towns are your best bet for survival, but it's no picnic out there, either. There may not be a zombie waiting every 20 yards, like in a city, but there are zombies out there roaming the woods. You can count on most towns being the domain of the dead. If you see a population sign on your way in, it's a safe bet that 60-80% have become walking dead. That's not always the case, and we've been pleasantly surprised to find towns where most of the zombies (99%) have been rooted out and humans retain control of their home – sometimes as many as 50% of them – but these "human-villes" are the rare exceptions, not the rule. On top of that, *not* all towns of human survivors are what we call "*Safe Haven Communities*." Some people are too scared to let outsiders in, even for a glass of water or to trade for supplies. They'll ask you to leave at the business end of a rifle. You press the point or make a threat, and the next thing you know, you're recreating the shoot-out at the O.K. Corral, and you don't need that. Besides, you're killing your fellow humans, and there's not enough of us left as it is. You are best flipping them the bird and moving on.

Other inhospitable human-occupied towns and farm communities may be home to *Retro-Savages*, *bandits*, *mercenaries*, *isolationists*, or even *Death Cultists*, so be careful where you stop and let down your guard. Dead is dead, be it at the hands of a zombie or your fellow man.

**Marked houses.** A lot of independent people, family clans, small bands of survivors, isolationists, hermits, loners and Retro-Savages have taken to marking their home. Things like "We shoot now." "Keep out." "Trespassers will be shot." "Outsiders not welcomed." "Stay out." "Need medicine." "No food here." "Hansen Family has gone north."

It has been my experience to trust what the sign say and respect the message. If you aren't wanted, you best move on. If you're desperate you can press your luck, but you're likely to go

from desperate to dead. Fear does funny things to people, and Mr. Nice Guy can become Mr. I'll Shoot You Dead If You Take Another Step On My Property."

Be cautious of signs that seem inviting or plead for help. The fact is, you don't know what you're walking into, or who painted that message, or when. The real Mr. Nice Guy might have fallen to the walking dead, bandits or madness months ago. Be careful. Don't trust anyone at first glance.

Inevitably, you'll see signs like, "Living are welcome." "Water (or food, or fuel, or medicine, or whatever) for trade." "Trading Post." "Meat for sale." "Horses (or Motorcycles) for sale." "Weapon Depot." "Safe Community." "Tavern." "Women." "Mechanic." Or things like "Living are here." "Help us please." "Need water." "Need medicine." "Mechanic wanted." "Guns for hire, wanted." "Join the fight to save humanity." And the likes might be true and might not. The inhabitants – be they a lone individual, a family, a band of neighbors, or a small community – may be legitimate, friendly, well intentioned or in need of your help, or they may be bushwhackers, bandits, crooks, con artists, or other lowlifes looking to take what you have, and that might include your life. **My advice:** Trust your gut. If it doesn't feel right, get out. First sign of trouble, get out. Seems too good to be true, it's probably a set up, get out.

**Avoid communities of Retro-Savages.** Retros hate people like you and me – survivors who still use technology and are trying to reclaim our world from the walking dead. They consider us "Techno-Rejects," "Sinners," "Blasphemers," "Children of Destruction," "fools" and a whole lot worse. Bottom line is this: you're either with them or against them. And if you haven't forsaken technology and joined a Retro group, *you are against them*. They blame us for the Wave and the Zombie Apocalypse. They believe we need to be punished for our sins, and that means either killing us outright or more likely than not, feeding us to zombies. By the way, they consider the walking dead to be agents of God. They call zombies the "Children of God," or the "Hand of God's Vengeance." Yeah, they are full of beans and, for my money, they're crazy as bedbugs. My point is, they are dangerous. You find yourself among Retro-Savages, get out fast.

Retro-Savages have forsaken the cities and live in the wild like Indians of old, or as farmers and small church-going communities, so if you're in rural country, you *will* come across them.

I will say this about most Retro-Savages, they are up front about who they are and what they believe. They don't, as a rule, try to lure people into their clutches and they often, though not always, mark their territory clearly. You see rooftops or signs that say things like, "Only God's People Welcomed," "God's Chosen Welcomed," "Technology Forsaken," "Technology is a sin," "Church of Redemption" or anything about "redemption" or "being saved," "Sinners Keep Out," or "God's Children," keep on riding. Likewise, if you realize you're in a town, village or farm where there's no electricity, tractors or technology, I'd say skip prayers and dinner and take your leave.

Problem is, half the survivor communities, farms and Safe Havens don't have power and have gone back to doing things the old-fashioned way with horses and such. It's safe, reliable, clean, quiet and doesn't leave a footprint easily noticed by evil-

doers. Please do not mistake all people of faith as being Retro-Savages or bad guys. There are plenty of good, Godfearing people with hearts of gold. We have plenty of them among the Reapers and as leaders of Safe Haven Communities across the land, but these Retro-Savages aren't to be counted among them. Understand?

## Safe Haven Communities

I'm not suggesting you fear everybody, just be cautious. I am proud to say that the vast majority of people we Reapers have encountered in the USA, Canada and Mexico are good folk. People who are quick to lend a hand to others in need. Humanity has rallied together in this crisis. Us Reapers see fellow humans coming to help total strangers from the clutches of zombies and helping their fellow man in one way or another almost every day we're on the road.

We call zombie free communities of such idealistic people, *Safe Haven Communities*. Places that welcome outsiders and who actively send teams into the cities and towns to rescue other survivors and bring them back to the Safe Haven.

These good folks will share basic food and drink, provide bandages, blankets, information and probably even medical attention and a safe place to sleep. Offer *your* services to help the community in some way, and you'll make friends fast and earn yourself a permanent *Welcome Mat* to town. But if you get too rowdy, demanding, threatening or do something to jeopardize the safety of even one person in that community, you'll get the boot and you best not come back. Behave, mind your manners, and be a help, not a fool or a liability you have a tremendous resource. And you need all the friends and Safe Havens you can come by in this new world of the dead.

Here are some tell-tale ways to recognize a friendly community: An active trading post, large or small, is usually a good sign. A place with military vehicles usually indicates a strong, independent community. They won't take anybody's crap, but if they invite you in and offer you help, they're probably legit. Any place where you find *Apocalyptic Soldiers*, *Hound Masters*, *Shepherds of the Damned* or us *Reapers* operating is going to be a Safe Haven, upright and probably outright heroic in their efforts to save humanity and help others.

The only thing you have to worry about at a Safe Haven community is them trying to enlist you to their cause. That means going on rescue missions, doing runs into towns and cities to get supplies and round up survivors, finding lost travelers, helping people in need, delivering food and medicine to those in need, police patrol work (checking on folks in the community, especially the farmers on the outskirts), and going on zombie killing runs. They may also want you to patrol the woods and exterminate any walking dead you come upon, or do scouting, guard or escort work, or join the local militia. Hey, if you're looking for a place to hang your hat, even for a little while, I say join the fight, brother. We need all the good men and women we can get. What do you have to lose? You're not a prisoner, you can move on anytime you want to, your among friends, and you'll always have a place to come back to that you can call home.

– Excerpted from the *Reaper's Survival Guide*



# Weapons & Equipment

“Everybody has their opinion on what you need to survive in the world of the dead. What follows is a list of notable, common items and goods that I think people need to survive. The pre-Zombie Apocalypse cash value is provided simply as a point of reference. What is valuable in one area may be next to worthless in another or cost ten times as much, depending on supply and demand.

“I’m *Nicolas Vicovsky*, but everybody calls me “Brick.” Not so many get a second chance in life, so I guess I’m one of the lucky ones. See, I wasn’t the most scrupulous guy in my past life. I was pretty much a straight up scum bag, preying on the innocent and weak to get a leg up. Things changed when the Wave hit and only got worse when the dead rose. After fleeing the city, dog eat dog survival was at the top of my list, just like the other scum. Only my past gave me an edge and I didn’t care who got hurt or left behind as long as I survived.

“That all changed for me when I met Brad Ashley and the Reapers. Showed me life is more than just about surviving and being king of the hill. It was a good fit, me and the Reapers. The rest is history. We do more than survive, we help other survivors and we fight for humanity. Zombie hunting is what we Reapers do best, and seeing as I have so much experience with weapons, wheels and gear, I’ve been asked to write this part of the *Reaper’s Survival Guide*.

“Everything that follows is what I have learned over the past few months surviving, fighting and riding with the Reapers. You

don’t have to agree with it, hell, you don’t even have to read it, but these words on paper can save your life if you let them.

“My only other advice: One, never leave the living behind, we are all that is left of humanity. Two, always be looking for zombies. When you stop watching out for the walking dead, that’s when they get you.”

– *Nick “The Brick” Vicovsky, Reaper*

In the world of **Dead Reign**, money is literally worth only the paper it’s printed on. Instead of currency, survivors trade in goods and services. The value of any particular item or service varies greatly from place to place and person to person. The Game Master needs to keep the basic principles of “supply and demand” in mind when handling the trading of goods and services.

## Commercial Firearms

**Game Note:** To keep things simple we have provided basic weapons and equipment. We are listing approximate damage per caliber, rather than by specific weapon (we list only a few choice examples of specific weapons). Revolvers, automatic pistols and submachine-guns take approximately the same type and caliber of ammunition. **Note:** For scores of firearms listings and stats, see the **Heroes Unlimited G.M.’s Guide**. For hundreds of firearms from around the world, each illustrated, plus body armor, and much more, see Palladium’s **Compendium of Contemporary Weapons**.

**Ammo:** Prices are per box of 100 rounds and are **pre-Apocalypse** prices. Consequently, price will vary greatly from those listed below from place to place. Weapons and ammo at many safe havens cost 50% more to double. Independent traders,

Scroungers and mercenaries may charge 300-500% more. Most of these items can be traded for only. Big-ticket items, such as rocket launchers and grenade belts, may require the trade of something worth significantly more than the item being traded for. After all, when it comes to weapons, it is truly a seller's market.

### Dollar Cost and Damage Listing by Caliber:

- .22 caliber, \$20.00 – 2D4 damage
- .32 A.C.P. caliber, \$25.00 – 2D6 damage
- .32 Long, \$25.00 – 3D6 damage
- .38 caliber, \$34.00 – 3D6 damage
- .38 Power caliber, \$38.00 – 4D6 damage
- .45 A.C.P., \$45.00 – 4D6 damage
- .41 Magnum, \$65.00 – 5D6 damage
- .44 Magnum, \$75.00 – 6D6 damage
- .357 Magnum, \$45.00 – 4D6 damage
- 9mm & 7.65mm (pistol) \$50.00 – 3D6 damage
- 10mm (pistol), \$60.00 – 4D6 damage
- 5.56mm (rifle), \$80.00 – 4D6 damage
- 7.5mm (rifle), \$90.00 – 4D6 damage
- 7.62mm (rifle), \$120.00 – 5D6 damage
- .30 caliber (rifle), \$70.00 – 4D6 damage
- .50 caliber (rifle), \$90.00 – 6D6 damage
- 40mm Grenade Cartridge \$1,000.00 (per 100) – 2D4x10 damage
- .30 Caliber Machine-Gun, \$280.00 – 1D4x10 damage
- .50 Caliber Machine-Gun, \$500.00 – 1D6x10 damage

**Some Special Cartridge Types:** The listed cost is the additional price to get a box of ammo with that one special feature/cartridge; apply to the cost per caliber.

**Tracer:** This cartridge contains a compound that ignites and burns when the cartridge is fired which creates a visible flight path from the gun to the target. This makes it easy to adjust fire, especially at night and during automatic burst fire. Cartridge range is reduced by 10-20%. When used in machine-guns, these rounds are placed once every 10 rounds along the belt, giving a bonus of +1 (single-shot) or +2 (burst fire) to strike. **Cost:** Add \$50 to ammunition cost.

**Hollow Point:** The bullet of this cartridge hollowed out and scored so that it expands (or “flowers”) on impact, causing a large wound (+3 to damage). Against hard structures, such as vehicles, doors, walls, and personal body armor, reduce the normal cartridge damage by one die. **For Example:** A gun that does 3D6 normally, does 3D6+3 versus a person, but only 2D6 against a car, wall, or armored person. **Cost:** Add \$50 to ammunition cost.

**Full Metal Jacket:** These rounds are coated with a tough metal jacket that adds +1D6 damage. Full metal jacket rounds exist for all small arm calibers. **Cost:** Add \$150 to ammunition cost. Uncommon.

**Armor Piercing/Teflon (KTW Rounds):** These rounds add +1D6 to damage and lower the A.R. of armored targets by 2, *but NOT zombies*. Extra damage against zombies applies. **Cost:** Add \$150 to ammunition cost. Uncommon.



**Exploding/Mercury-Tipped Shells:** Primarily used in pistols because burst fire has a 40% chance of prematurely rupturing the shell. These bullets do not actually have an explosive charge in them, but rather contain a small mercury-filled chamber. Upon impact, the shell shatters, filling the victim with tiny shrapnel. Adds +2D6 to damage, even against zombies, but reduces range by 10%. **Cost:** Add \$400 to ammunition cost. Rare!

## Low Caliber Pistols

Personally, I don't see much use for pea-shooters like .22 caliber, .25 caliber, 6.35mm or even .32 caliber and 7.65 caliber pistols and revolvers.

Zombie Combat Note: Have minimal effect against the walking dead. Inflict *half damage* to the main body and limbs of zombies; 10% damage to the head and neck.

Damage: 2D4 damage (half, 1D4, against zombies).

Damage: Typically inflicts 2D4 damage per bullet.

Typical Range: 115 feet (35 m), excellent for close combat.

Typical Payload: Revolvers: 6 bullets. Pistols: 6-12 depending on the magazine, plus one in the chamber.

Cost: \$350-\$900.

## Medium to Heavy Handguns

Choosing a revolver pistol is a very personal choice. More often than not, this will be the one weapon that you rely on when your life is really on the line. You want something that will be reliable, accurate and deadly. I highly suggest you choose a service pistol, semi-automatic, with a large caliber round. My personal favorite is the 1911 .45 ACP. The ammo is widely available, clips are easy to find, and the pistol never jams. Yeah, some argue that the pistol is a little heavy, and maybe a bit bulky, but I am not trying to hide it and nothing will mist a melon better than a .45 ACP. Sure, some might argue the newer 9mm and 10mm pistols are just as good, but not for my money. As for hand-cannons like the Magnum, they are too heavy and unwieldy for most people, but a choice if you have experience with firearms, the strength to handle one, and the desire to use one; not popular among us Reapers.

Zombie Combat Note: .38 caliber, .45 caliber, .357 Magnum, 9mm and similar medium to heavy caliber rounds (bullets), as well as dum-dum rounds, hollow/soft-point rounds, and explosive bullets, all inflict *full damage* on zombies, though they require a "Called Shot" to hit a specific limb, or the neck or head.

Damage by Caliber/Bullet Type:

Medium rounds (.38 to 9mm) typically do 2D6 damage.

Heavier rounds (.45 caliber, .357 Magnum) inflict 4D6 damage per bullet.

.41 Magnum does 5D6 damage per bullet.

.44 Magnum inflicts 5D6+3 damage per bullet.

Typical Range: Revolvers and automatic pistols: 135 feet (41 m), excellent for close combat.

Typical Payload: Revolvers: 6 bullets. Pistols: 8-15 depending on the magazine, plus one in the chamber.

Cost: \$700-\$1,500.

## Submachine-Guns

Submachine-guns have the advantage of firing bursts, but have reduced accuracy and increased chance of shooting a teammate or bystander. I don't like them and do not recommend them.

Zombie Combat Note: Submachine-guns are burst fire only, are not accurate, cannot be used to make "Called Shots" (no head

shots or targeting of limbs; main body only) and are likely to spray an area and hurt innocent bystanders or teammates.

Damage: Most fire medium pistol ammunition (9mm). A three round burst does 3D6 damage, a five round burst does 5D6 damage.

Typical Range: 500 feet (152.4 m) for many, the better weapons (Uzi, Mini-Uzi, Beretta, Ingram, Sig) can fire up to 650 feet (198 m). Not advised for close combat; stray rounds.

Typical Payload: 15 or 30 rounds/bullets. Special banana clips and drums, 50 to 90 rounds.

Cost: \$600-\$1,500.

## Shotguns

Every Reaper has a cut down shotgun, and I recommend you do likewise. At close range they will turn a zombie into fertilizer with two or three blasts to the head, and you don't even have to be all that accurate. Even a blast that does little or no damage might have enough impact to stagger a zombie and get him out of your way or make him let go of a buddy in his clutches. Shotguns also work wonders for crowd control.

Typical Shotguns: Semi-automatic/self-loading shotguns can fire a single shot, double blast or three-round burst that acts as a short burst, but it is -1 to strike.

Typical Shotgun Range: 150 feet (45.7 m). Buckshot and similar fragmentation rounds will spray a 3 foot (0.9 meter) area.

A sawed-off shotgun has a dramatically reduced barrel size which increases the width of the buck shot "spray" (covers a 5 foot/1.5 m area), but reduces the effective range to 60 feet (18.3 m), but that's perfect for mixing it up close with zombies.

Typical Shotgun Damage: 4D6 for Buckshot (scatters to cover a 3 ft/0.9 m area at 30 feet (9.1 m) and a 10 foot/3 m area at 60 feet/18.3 m), but only does only 2D6 damage to zombies.

5D6 damage for a single *solid slug*, 1D4x10+8 damage per double barrel blast or 1D6x10+4 for a triple shot burst.

Typical Payload: 5 or 7 round tubular magazine (common commercial shotgun); 5 or 8 round detachable box magazine or a 12 to 20 round drum (police and military style).

Izhmash Saiga-12 Combat Shotgun: As with all things, I have my personal preferences. I suggest the *Izhmash Saiga-12 shotgun*. The Saiga is a shotgun based on the Kalishnikoff (AK-47) design. It is a clip fed, gas operated, semi-automatic shotgun capable of firing 3 inch magnum shells. With both 5 round and 10 round clips, reloading is fast and easy. With its 19 inch barrel and optional folding stock, you won't find a more compact design. Yeah, I know I sound like I am selling the damn things, but truth is, you couldn't pry one from my cold, dead hands. If you do find one, you should be able to fetch a good trade for it should you choose to part with it.

Single shot, short burst, or long burst; treat it just like any semi-auto weapon.

Place of Origin: Russia.

Manufacturer: Izhevsk Mechanical Works.

Weight: 7.7 lbs (3.5 kg).

Barrel Length: 19 inches (430 mm).

Overall Length: 35.8/26 inches (910/670 mm; buttstock open/folded).

Action: Gas-operated, rotating bolt.

Range: 150 feet (45.7).

Damage: 12 gauge: 5D6 damage per single shot. Short Burst (three rounds): 1D6x10 damage. Long Burst (five rounds): 2D4x10+8 damage.

20 gauge: 4D6 damage per single shot. Short Burst (three rounds): 1D4x10 damage. Long Burst (five rounds): 1D6x10 damage.

.410: 3D6 damage per single shot. Short Burst (three rounds): 6D6 damage. Long Burst (five rounds): 1D4x10+6 damage.

Payload: 3, 5, or 10 round detachable box magazine with or 20 round drum.

## Rifles

**Hunting Rifles:** Hunting rifles are great for two things, killing deer for food, and sniper shots at zombies. I suppose you could use it as a bludgeoning weapon if it came right down to it, but again there are other tools more suited to the job. Just don't take one of these with you on a bike, they are big, with a slow rate of fire and require accuracy.

### Hunting Rifles and Sniper Rifles:

Zombie Combat Note: If the roll to strike beats the zombie's A.R., rifles inflict full damage and can be used to make "Called Shots."

Damage: 5D6 damage per single bullet.

Typical Rifle Range: 2,000 feet (610 m; increase by 30% for a sniper rifle).

Typical Payload: 5-20 rounds in a detachable magazine.

Cost: \$800-\$2,000.

**Assault Rifles (Military):** I have not found any good reason to use an assault rifle except against the living. While they can throw a bunch of lead, generally it just punches holes in the necrotic flesh rather than slowing the zombies down. Also, they lack the accuracy needed to pick off zombies at range and wild firing is likely to hit a comrade or innocent person. I would look to something either more accurate like a rifle, or something with more area damage like a shotgun.

Zombie Combat Note: Burst fire can only hit the zombie's main body, it cannot be used to make a "Called Shot." However, most assault rifles have a select switch for single round firing or semi-automatic (burst firing). A single shot (4D6+2 damage) can be used to target a limb or make a head or neck shot.

Damage: Single shot: 4D6+2 damage. 6D6+4 damage per short burst (three rounds) or 1D6x10 damage for a five round burst.

Typical Rifle Range: 1,200 feet (366 m).

Typical Payload: 30 rounds in a detachable magazine.

Cost: \$1,000-\$2,000.

## Machine-Guns (Military)

Guys like us have no need for machine-guns. They are only worthwhile if you are trying to hold a fortified position, making a major siege or defending a Safe Haven Community. To make a long story short, there is no place for a machine-gun in close combat operations. Use one and you are likely to get your buddies killed. Yeah, I know, big guns look cool in the movies.

Well, this isn't The Predator. This is the real world, and you are engaging in urban combat inside buildings, houses, on city streets and tight places. A machine-gun will rip right through the zombies, punch through a plaster wall, wood planks, aluminum and even thin metal (cars) like a sheet of paper and destroy property and kill everyone in the next room or two or three. You do not want that on your conscience.

Zombie Combat Note: Machine-guns are burst fire only, are not accurate, cannot be used to make "Called Shots" (no head shots or targeting limbs; main body only) and are big, heavy weapons that often require a two-man team to handle and use. That having been said, they can chew through the Main Body S.D.C. of zombies and can be of great value in a fortified position, bunkers, guard towers and so on. Light, medium and heavy machine-gun rounds do full damage to zombies.

Bonus: A zombie's A.R. is considered to be 12 for medium and heavy machine-guns.

Typical Damage: Light (man-portable): 1D6x10 damage per eight round burst.

Medium: 2D4x10+5 damage per eight round burst.

Heavy: 2D6x10+10 per eight round burst.

Typical Range: Light: 2,000 feet (610 m). Medium: 3,000 feet (914 m). Heavy: 4,000 feet (1219 m). Not suitable or advised for close combat. Machine-guns will do damage to everything in the surrounding area and are likely to hurt or kill innocent bystanders and teammates. Best suited to open areas and attacks from a distance.

Typical Payload: 30 rounds in a detachable magazine.

Cost: \$4,000-\$6,500. Availability is terrible; rare.

**Rifle Grenades & Hand Grenades (Military):** See the section on Explosives and Grenades. **Note:** Explosives only do half damage to zombies. *Military grade weapons* such as assault rifles, but especially heavy weapons like machine-guns, grenade launchers, grenades, rocket launchers, mines and flamethrowers and their ammunition are extremely hard to find and should be considered *rare*. The average survivor is NOT likely to find any.

## Firearm Accessories

**Ankle Holster:** Padded for comfort, with velcro closure. Fits a snub-nosed revolver or any *small* frame automatic. Can be concealed under pant leg. \$50-\$100.

**Battle Harness:** Combination of suspenders and belt designed for distributing the weight of ammo pouches and accessories. In choice of camouflage, black, grey, brown, cream or khaki. \$150-\$200.

**Battle Pack:** Lightweight frame, heavy-duty, water resistant canvas. Multiple interior and exterior compartments. Fasteners for exterior pouches/grenades. Choice of camouflage, green or khaki colors. \$350-\$450.

**Chemical Mace:** A stinging chemical spray that blinds one's opponent (much better than hair spray). Victims are -6 to strike, parry and dodge. **Effective Range:** 4 to 6 feet (1.2 to 1.8 m). **Duration:** 4D4 melees. **Cost:** \$16.00, with about 20 sprays before empty.

**Inside Trousers Holster:** Clips on belt or waistband of pants. \$30-\$60.

**Side Holster (fits onto belt).** \$50-\$100.

**Belt Slide Holster.** \$50-\$100.

**Belt Thumbbreak Holster.** \$50-\$100.

**Patrolman, Police-Style Belt and Holster,** 24 bullet loops. \$90-\$150.

**Police-Style Shoulder Holster.** \$120-\$200.

**Military-Style Shoulder Holster.** \$70-\$120.

**Horizontal Shoulder Holster.** \$100-\$200.

**Scoped Shoulder Holster.** \$100-\$200.

**Concealed Wallet Holster** for *small* automatic weapons; fits easily into back trouser pocket. \$80-\$120.

**Web Belt** with holster, ammo pouches (2) and accessory attachment clips (4). \$60-\$80.

**Magazine Clip Pouch:** Each of these specially designed ammo pouches is designed for 2 (slimline) or 4 (heavy-duty) ammo clips. Choice of camouflage, green, khaki or black colors.

Automatic Pistol: 2 clips \$25, 4 clips \$50.

Submachine-gun: 2 magazines – \$25, 4 mags – \$50

5.56mm Assault Rifle, 20-rnd: 2 clips, \$30; 4 clips, \$45

5.56mm Assault Rifle, 30-rnd: 2 clips, \$35; 4 clips, \$50

7.62mm Assault Rifle, 20-rnd: 2 clips, \$38; 4 clips, \$60

7.62mm Assault Rifle, 30-rnd: 2 clips, \$40; 4 clips, \$75

**Magazine Ammo Bags.** \$40-\$60.

**Assault Rifle Case.** \$120-\$200.

**Rifle Case.** \$90-\$150.

**Submachine-Gun Case.** \$80-\$120.

**Shotgun Bandoleer:** Made of leather, with a heavy-duty, brass belt buckle. Shotgun Bandoleer holds 56 rounds. 40mm grenade belt holds 18 rounds. \$50-\$90.

**Wrist Cartridge Bandoleer:** Perfect for concealing 3 extra cartridges. \$30-\$50.

**Metal Ammunition Boxes:** These waterproof ammo boxes are designed for easy storage and carrying. .50 caliber size: \$30, .30 caliber size: \$24.

**Field Gun Cleaning Kit:** A complete cleaning kit contained in its own pouch. \$35-\$60.

**Gun Repair Kit:** This is a 4 pound (1.8 kg) gun repair kit. Each tool is fitted into a separate loop and there's plenty of room for spare bolts, screws, springs and cleaning rods. Contained in a 12 inch by 8 inch by 2 inch (30x20x5 cm) case. Can be attached to a harness or worn over the shoulder with strap, which is included. \$300.

**Magazine Clips:** Any weapon, any size, from 7-round pistol to 30-round rifle. \$5 each.

**Web Belt:** Classic military belt complete with buckle and pouch fasteners. Choice of camouflage, green or khaki. \$25-\$45.

**Multi-Purpose Pouch:** All around, useful utility pouch designed for attachment to web belt or battle harness. \$10-\$15 each.

**Silencer:** An attachment which fits over the barrel of a gun to muffle the sound of the report. Perception Rolls require a 10 to detect silenced shots from 20 feet (6.1 m) away; outside of that, silenced shots are inaudible. Silencers reduce a weapon's

range by 10%. **Cost:** Pistol or SMG: \$500-\$700. Rifle: \$1,000-\$2,000.

**Flash Suppressor:** An attachment that fits over a gun barrel to mask the muzzle flash during firing. Characters within 100 feet (30.5 m) of a suppressed shot have only a 25% chance of seeing it. Outside of that, suppressed shots are not visible. **Cost:** Pistol or SMG: \$500-\$700. Rifle: \$900-\$1,400. **Note:** Combined silencers and flash suppressors cost \$1,200 (pistol or SMG) or \$2,300 (rifle) and reduce a weapon's range by 25%.

**Recoil Diminishers:** A small tube filled with mercury and ball bearings and mounted along the length of the firearm to counter recoil during firing. The system is custom built for each class and type of firearm. Adds +1 to strike when burst firing. Not usable with heavy weapons. **Cost:** \$1,000.

## Explosives

Explosives are generally restricted to industrial and military use and difficult to obtain. There is always a 20% chance that the item is fake or a dud. Also see *Grenades* and *Incendiary Weapons* in this Explosives section. **Zombie Combat Note:** Explosives and grenades are effective against crowds and hordes of zombies, but damage comes off Main Body S.D.C. first, the monsters get right back up (lose two melee attacks) to keep on coming, and explosions and shrapnel do *half damage* to zombies.

**Dynamite** is a nitroglycerin based explosive widely used in mining and road construction. It can be detonated with blasting caps, fuses and timing devices. Wick fuses were rarely used before *The Wave*, but about half use them today. **Damage:** *One stick:* 1D4x10. **Blast Radius:** 10 feet (3 m). **Note:** Fair availability. **Cost:** \$30-50 per stick, plus detonation cap/fuse: \$30 each.

**Homemade Bombs:** Any variety, usually incorporate chemicals or gunpowder or dynamite: **Damage:** 5D6. **Blast Radius:** 10 feet (3 m). \$10-\$20 in materials, per bomb.

**Liquid Nitroglycerin** is an extremely dangerous, unstable, chemical explosive concentrate. A severe jar, jerk or bump can cause it to detonate; 30% chance. **Damage:** *One ounce (28 g) is equal to four sticks of dynamite:* 4D4x10. **Blast Radius:** 20 feet (6.1 m). **Cost:** \$200-300 per ounce (28 grams). Poor availability.

**Plastique and Gelatin** explosives are very localized blast explosives that can be molded and formed like putty. Inert, you can slam a plastic explosive into a wall and nothing will happen. It can only be activated/ignited by an electrical blasting cap that will pass an electrical charge through it, causing it to explode. Any electrical charge, blast or bolt is also likely to detonate it; 55% chance. **Damage:** Plastic: 2 ounces (56 g) or Gelatin: 1 ounce (28 grams) is equal to one stick of dynamite: 1D4x10 damage. **Blast Radius:** Tiny and precise: exactly where the plastic or gel has been placed, typically about one foot (30 cm). Of course, depending on what is being exploded, it could cause much more additional destruction and damage. **Note:** These explosives are used to open safes and for sabotage. They are not effective area effect weapons and can't be used like a grenade. **Cost:** Plastique \$100-\$160 for two ounces (56 grams) or Gelatin: \$140-\$200 per ounce (28 grams), plus detonation/blasting cap: \$30 each.





## Grenades

Military grade weapons are always rare, hard to come by and typically command 2-5 times the price listed. Poor availability. Gas weapons do NOT work on zombies.

**Explosive Grenade (Military):** Pull pin and throw at target. **Weight:** 10 ounces (283 grams). **Range:** 120 feet (36.6 m) thrown. **Damage:** 2D4x10. **Blast Radius:** 15 feet (4.6 m); everything in the blast takes damage. **Cost:** \$120-\$200 each. Poor availability.

**Gas, Tear (Military & Police):** A potent irritant temporarily impairs vision and respiration, causing eyes to burn and water profusely, skin to burn (a sensation, not in actuality), and making breathing very difficult. **Note:** Doesn't work on zombies. **Victims** are -10 to strike, parry, dodge, disarm, and -3 on initiative. Effects are immediate and last for 3D4 melee rounds. **Gas Radius:** 25 foot (7.6 m) radius. **Saving Throw:** None; a gas mask counters the gas. **Cost:** \$75-\$100 each. **Cost:** \$400-\$500 each. Fair to poor availability.

**Gas, Knockout (Military):** These are tranquilizers; anesthesia-type mists that will induce drowsiness within 1D4 melees and sleep within 1D4 minutes. **Saving Throw:** If a character makes a successful saving throw vs toxins, his body has successfully fought off the effects of the gas and is unimpaired. However, the player must roll once for every minute (four melees) that the character is exposed to the gas (gas masks block this attack). **Gas Radius:** 25 foot (7.6 m) radius. **Cost:** \$800-\$1,000 each. Rare, poor availability.

**Smoke Grenade (Military & Police):** **Weight:** 10 ounces (283 grams). **Effective Radius:** 20 feet (6.1 m). **Effective Range:** 100 feet (30.5 m). **Damage:** None; creates a smoke filled area to provide protective cover (opponents can not see into or through the smoke) or as a signal. Opponents whose vision is obscured by the smoke are -8 to strike, parry and dodge. **Zombie Combat Note:** Penalties are half for zombies because they can still sense and see P.P.E. of the human aura. However, they tend to stay at the edge of smoke clouds and don't go in,

because where there is smoke, there is usually *fire*. **Colors:** Black, grey, red, yellow. **Cost:** \$40-\$70 each. Fair availability.

**Rifle Launched Grenades (Military & Police):** Explosive or smoke grenades fired from an assault rifle. The previous stated damage and effects apply. **Rifle Range:** 1150 feet (350 m); *single shot*. **Damage:** 2D4x10 to 15 foot (4.6 m) radius, no damage for smoke. **Cost:** \$240-\$300 each. Poor availability.

## Incendiary Weapons

**M-2A1-7 Portable Flamethrower (Military):** With a solid stream of fire, a soldier could clear out an entire enemy machine-gun nest. In confined spaces (inside a bunker, foxhole or building), everyone in the target area is affected equally. **Zombie Combat Note:** Zombies are terrified of fire and flee from it. They also suffer *double* the damage listed. A flamethrower always parts a horde of zombies like Moses parting the Red Sea, even if it's only for 4D4 seconds per blast. See *Molotov Cocktail* for reasons to be careful with fire and zombies. **Damage:** 1D6x10, plus ignition of all combustible material. **Weight of the Weapon:** 42.5 pounds (19 kg). **Feed:** Manual. **Range:** Un-thickened: 70 feet (21.3 m). Thickened: 150 feet (45.7 m). **Cost:** \$600-\$1,000; a military grade weapon, rare.

**AN-M14 TH3 Incendiary Hand Grenade (Military):** This is one of the most dangerous weapons and not just for the enemy. It is difficult or impossible to throw it far enough to avoid getting hit with fragments.

**Range:** 120 feet (36.6 m) thrown. **Damage:** 12 foot (3.6 m) radius at the blast center inflicts 2D4x10+20 S.D.C.; outer blast radius 30 feet (9.1 m) away 1D6x10 damage. Burns for 1D4+6 melee rounds. **Weight:** 24 ounces (0.7 kg). **Time Delay Fuse:** 4-5 seconds. **Cost:** \$350-\$600; rare.

**Molotov Cocktail:** A classic incendiary weapon, since it is so easy to make from commonly available materials. **Zombie Combat Note:** Molotov Cocktails are a good way to scare off big groups of zombies, the bigger the flame the better. Fire strikes a primal fear into the walking dead and pushes even the largest crowds back for a minute or two, probably longer. And one minute is likely all you need to make good an escape. Remember what your mama told you, "Play with fire and you are likely to get burned." Be careful where you are throwing your cocktail because it will set a house on fire. Likewise, catch one of those walking corpses on fire and he will try to give you a hug! Don't catch a zombie on fire unless you are going for a total "scorched earth" attack where you expect everything around them to burn down. Otherwise, a burning zombie will run around (for 1D4+1 melee rounds) catching everything else on fire before it falls over dead. Trust me, a zombie engulfed in flames is one of the scariest things you can encounter. **Range:** 30 feet (9.1 m) thrown. **Damage:** 3D6 damage to a 12 foot (3.6 m) radius. Burns for 8 melee rounds (two minutes), but may cause secondary and larger fires if combustible materials are set ablaze. **Cost:** Negligible, about \$2-\$5 (the key ingredient is a flammable liquid).

**Flare Gun:** The flare gun has not changed much over the decades and is basically like those we use today. It is generally used as a signal or to light up an area. *Used for Luminescence:* Lights up a 300 foot (91.4 m) area for about five melees (75 seconds). It is not intended to be a weapon, thus it is not balanced for aiming; W.P. handguns skill bonuses do NOT apply. **Zom-**

**bie Combat Note:** Can be used to set a zombie on fire, but see the hazard of doing so under *Molotov Cocktail*. Not designed to be a weapon; -1 to strike at close range (within 20 feet/6.1 m of the target), -3 at a greater distance. **Range:** 300 feet (91.4 m) up in the air. **Damage:** 2D6 per melee ignited (5 melees). **Rate of Fire:** Two per melee. **Weight:** 2 pounds (0.9 kg). **Cost:** \$240 for the gun only; flares cost \$12 each. Wide availability.

**Road Flare/Handheld Flares:** The handheld flare is generally used to mark an area or for signaling. They are similar to those used by present day truck drivers. **Zombie Combat Note:** Road flares are a great way to make light and scare away a small group of Zombies. You should always keep one within reach on your bike or on your belt. They are easy to light and produce a hot flame. I have found that they are less useful in large crowds of zombies, because the fire is too small. But a flare will get one or two to back off every time, at least for a few seconds (one melee round/15 seconds) every time you shove the flare in its face. If there are three or more, one of the zombies will take a swing at you to knock the flare out of your hand. **Range:** Handheld. **Damage:** One point. **Rate of Fire:** Each activation counts as one melee action; burns for 2D4+10 minutes. **Weight:** 6 ounces (170 grams). **Cost:** \$5 each; good availability.

**Rocket Flare:** This handheld flare has a disposable, one time, launch mechanism which fires the flare gun. Commonly used for expeditions in the wild. A (minus) -3 to strike penalty applies if used as a weapon. **Zombie Combat Note:** Can be used to set a zombie on fire, but see the hazard of doing so under *Molotov Cocktail*. Not designed to be a weapon; -2 to strike at close range (within 20 feet/6.1 m of the target), -6 at a greater distance. **Range:** 300 feet (91.4 m) straight up. **Damage:** 2D6. **Rate of Fire:** One per flare. **Capacity:** One. **Weight:** 5 ounces (141 grams). **Cost:** \$15 each; fair availability.

**Rocket Parachute Flare:** A signal flare that is fired from a single hand launch tube or flare gun and deploys a parachute-support star. No visible rocket trail is left behind in its launch wake to give away the firer's position. **Maximum Height:** 1000 feet (305 m). **Duration of Illumination:** 30 seconds. **Rate of Fire:** One per flare. **Power:** 200,000 candela. **Colors:** White, red, green, and yellow. **Cost:** \$15 per flare, plus \$300 for the launcher. Fair to poor availability.

**Distress Signal Kit:** Consists of a tube launcher and six red flares. **Zombie Combat Note:** Can be used to set a zombie on fire, but see the hazard of doing so under *Molotov Cocktail*. Not designed to be a weapon; -3 to strike at close range (within 20 feet/6.1 m of the target), -8 at a greater distance. **Maximum Height:** 900 feet (274 m). **Duration of Illumination:** 30 seconds. **Damage:** 2D4. **Rate of Fire:** One per flare. **Power:** 10,000 candela. **Cost:** \$160.

**Mini-Signal Cartridges:** A lightweight signal cartridge designed for the military special forces. Fired from a single-handed, lightweight, pen-type launcher. **Zombie Combat Note:** Can be used to set a zombie on fire, but see the hazard of doing so under *Molotov Cocktail*. Not designed to be a weapon; -2 to strike at close range (within 20 feet/6.1 m of the target), -6 at a greater distance. **Maximum Height:** 320 feet (97.5 m). **Duration of Illumination:** 10 seconds. **Damage:** 1D6. **Rate of Fire:** One per flare. **Power:** 150,000 candela. **Colors Available:** Green, red or white. **Cost:** \$300.

## Crossbows

Crossbows are silent killers, in a pinch you can use a wooden dowel rod for ammunition, and if you want you can attach a rope to the bolt. I have found many uses for a crossbow in the past few months, while not the greatest tool to drop a zombie, putting an 18 inch shaft of wood or aluminum into one sure slows them down. If you can make it by a hunting supply house, you will find some of the most creative and deadly devices to attach to the end of the bolt. Hunters designed these for deer, but they work just as good on zombies.

**Crossbows** were designed to punch through armor, have more power, and inflict full damage to zombies. Furthermore, a crossbow bolt to the head inflicts full damage and a Natural 20 cracks the skull wide open and inflicts triple damage the same as a shotgun blast or any other Natural 20 to the head. A conventional bow and arrows cannot do this, not even a compound bow. Furthermore, a crossbow can shoot, not only the heavy bolts designed for it, but crude, homemade bolts, stakes and even broken table legs!

**Range:** Light Crossbow: 340 feet (104 m). Medium: 500 feet (152 m), Heavy Crossbow: 700 feet (213 m). Small pistol models are ineffective against zombies (no damage) so they are not listed. Reduce range by half when firing crude homemade bolts.

**Damage:** Light: 2D4. Medium: 2D6. Heavy: 2D8.

**Cost:** \$350-\$900.

**Spear Gun (Underwater):** Though not a crossbow, this seemed like a good place for this weapon. A harpoon gun, typically capable of firing two spears and may come with a cable and reel, or simply fires the spear.

**Range:** 340 feet (104 m).

**Damage:** 2D6.

**Cost:** \$300-\$600.

## Bow & Arrows

Generally, bows and arrows are not powerful enough to be effective against zombies. Shooting a zombie in the head with a conventional hunting arrow has no effect on the creature. Arrows to the body inflict minimal pain and no damage to the walking dead. You can turn a zombie into a walking pincushion and shoot it in the head as much as you'd like, but arrows do no damage.

**Range:** Short Bow: 340 feet (104 m). Long Bow: 640 feet (195 m). Modern Compound Bow: 700 feet (213 m). Reduce range by half when firing crude homemade arrows.

**Damage:** Short and Long Bow: None to zombies. Against other living beings, damage is as follows; Short: 1D6 damage. Long: 2D6 damage.

Modern Compound Bow: 2D6+1 damage to living creatures, 1D6 to zombies.

**Zombie Combat Note:** Modern compound bows with a pull of 50 lbs (22.5 kg) or more do half damage to zombies.

**Cost:** \$200-\$600.

### Special Use of the Bow and Arrow

Despite what I said above, bow weapons can be extremely effective, provided one knows how to use them right.

**Arrows tipped with fire, flares or explosives** are very effective. You might think *exploding arrows* defeats the purpose of a “silent” attack, but it doesn’t. Long-range arrow attacks (several hundred feet/meters; from rooftops, windows, tree cover, etc.) are silent until the explosive arrow hits, then it explodes or bursts into flame. There is no sound of gunfire or muzzle flash for the zombies to follow to its source. Consequently, attacks with explosive and flare arrows (igniting on impact), confuse zombies. They know they are under fire, but they don’t know where their attacker(s) is, they can’t retaliate, and most are too stupid to take cover. In fact, the sound of combat and the bellow of zombies under attack are likely to bring other zombies into the field of fire, providing more targets for destruction. A successful long-range bombardment like this can be rather like shooting fish in a barrel and result in the destruction of dozens of zombies. Of course, for best results, the attackers must aim to destroy the zombie’s head to kill it, which takes skill and practice.

## Blunt Weapons

I knew this guy who had all kinds of interesting medieval toys, one of them was a real mace. I was fortunate enough to get him to trade it to me before he drowned trying to cross a river in his chain mail. I must say I am very impressed by the English engineering that went into it. Knights of old used to ride through lines of soldiers on a horse and dispatch as many foot soldier as possible without getting pulled off their horse. This is not too dissimilar to what the Reapers do, except our horses are made of iron and those soldiers are zombies. The mace is just as effective today on a motorcycle (or a horse) as it was hundreds of years ago. You can smash skulls and break bones with extreme prejudice and the head of the mace won’t get stuck inside the walking corpses pull you off your mount. Unlike a bat or a crowbar, the mace is balanced to be wielded one-handed, and is just long enough to give you the reach you need and not put you off balance. I love them and recommend them.

**Ball & Chain:** Cost: \$80-\$120. Damage: 2D4.

**Ball & Chain, Spiked Mace & Chain:** Cost: \$150-\$200. Damage: 3D6.

**Ball & Chain, Flail (large):** Cost: \$180-\$300. Damage: 3D6.

**Black Jack:** A small handheld club, usually handmade, 10 inches (25 cm) long, weighing 2 to 4 pounds (0.9 to 1.8 kg). Cost: \$30-\$50. Damage: 1D6.

**Baseball Bat, Composite Professional (various types):** Cost: \$200-\$800. Damage: 2D4+2.

**Baseball Bat, Aluminum (various types):** Cost: \$25-\$120. Damage: 1D6.

**Baseball Bat, Wood (various types):** Cost: \$20-\$120. Damage: 1D8.

**Brass Knuckles:** Cost: \$30-\$50. Damage: 1D6 + punch damage and P.S. damage bonus (if any).

**Club/Cudgel (various types):** Cost: \$10-\$60. Damage: 2D4.

**Crowbar, Medium:** Cost: \$12-\$20. Damage: 1D8.

**Crowbar, Large:** Cost: \$20-\$30. Damage: 2D6. Note: If intended as a weapon, the user might want to pad part of it for



easier grip. The first thing that every zombie fighter and survivor needs is a crowbar. A big one. This three and half foot (1 m) pry bar will easily break chains, pop open doors, crack skulls and save your life more than any other single tool you can own. Lots of new guys reach for a baseball bat, but this is a newbie mistake. Baseball bats have a wide cross section that distribute the impact over a large surface, they break or bend under much torque and are really only good for hitting baseballs. If you can't find a real crowbar, get a good length of steel pipe until you do find one.

**Fiberglass Nightstick:** Cost: \$25. **Damage:** 1D6.

**Fiberglass Nightstick, Reinforced with Metal Core:** Cost: \$50. **Damage:** 1D8+1.

**Frying Pan:** Cost: \$25-\$45. **Damage:** 1D6. **Note:** -2 to parry.

**Hammer, Ball-Peen (various):** Cost: \$12-\$30. **Damage:** 2D4. **Note:** -2 to parry.

**Hammer, Claw (various):** Cost: \$10-\$20. **Damage:** 1D6 blunt end, 1D6+2 claw end, but the claw has a 01-66% chance of getting stuck inside a zombie requiring the expense of one melee attack to yank it free. **Note:** -1 to parry.

**Hammer, Maul (oversized wood hammer on an axe handle):** Cost: \$25-\$40. **Damage:** 2D6. **Note:** -1 to strike and parry.

**Hammer, Sledge (various):** Cost: \$50-\$100. **Damage:** 2D6+2 with a medium-sized sledge, or 3D6+3 large. **Note:** A sledge hammer strike counts as two melee attacks, requires a P.S. of 20 or higher to use it, and is -2 to strike and parry.

**Hercules Club (giant mace with long handle):** Cost: \$200-\$350. **Damage:** 3D6+3. **Note:** An attack with a Hercules Club counts as two melee attacks, and requires a P.S. of 18 or higher to use it.

**Iron Staff:** Cost: \$150-\$200. **Damage:** 2D6+2.

**Mace (various types):** Cost: \$50-\$100. **Damage:** 2D6.

**Morning Star (spiked mace):** Cost: \$120-\$250. **Damage:** 2D6+2.

**Nunchaku (wood):** Cost: \$40-\$80. **Damage:** 2D4.

**Pipe, Iron/Steel/Lead:** Cost: \$15-\$30. **Damage:** 2D6

**Sap Glove:** Six ounces (0.2 kg) of powdered lead is built into each glove just above the knuckles, padding the wearer and adding weight and strength to the force of one's blow. +2 to damage. Available from most security guard suppliers. **Cost:** \$30-\$40.

**Shovel (large):** Cost: \$25-\$40. **Damage:** 1D8. **Note:** Has a 01-50% chance of getting stuck in a zombie when used to stab/impale.

**War Hammer (long handle):** Cost: \$100-\$200. **Damage:** 3D4.

**Wooden War Club (various types):** Cost: \$80-\$160. **Damage:** 2D6.

**Wood Bo Staff, Very Long:** Cost: \$100-\$200. **Damage:** 2D46

**Wood Staff, Long (various):** Cost: \$50-\$100. **Damage:** 2D4.

**Wood Staff, Quarter Staff (various):** Cost: \$80-\$150. **Damage:** 2D6.

## Blade Weapons

**Axe, Battle (large, single blade):** Cost: \$150-\$280; custom made. **Damage:** 3D6.

**Axe, Battle (large, two blades):** Cost: \$250-\$500; custom made. **Damage:** 3D6.

**Axes, Fire (large, single blade and a pick end):** As used by firefighters. **Cost:** \$80-\$100. **Damage:** Axe: 2D6+2. Pick: 1D8. **Note:** Has 25% chance of getting stuck in a zombie.

**Axe, Hatchet:** Multi-purpose tool that is small and easy to carry on a belt, in a tool kit, or in a backpack. The blunt end can be used as a hammer. The blade end can be used for chopping wood, breaking and entry (chop out a lock, break a window), and fighting zombies. Ideal for chopping off a zombie's hand at the wrist. **Cost:** \$25-\$40. **Damage:** 2D4 with blade end, 1D4 damage with the blunt end. **Note:** Has 10% chance of getting stuck in a zombie.

**Modern Knives:** Small blade weapons are not real effective against zombies as you want to avoid combat that close up, and they do no damage to the walking dead. However, against wild animals, human predators and as a utility device, knives are a welcomed tool.

**Bayonet:** Attaches to combat rifles. **Cost:** \$140. **Damage:** 1D6.

**Boot Knife (small):** For easy concealment. **Cost:** \$20. **Damage:** 1D4.

**Boot Knife (large/survival knife):** Forget about any folding or pocket knife, they will only break on you. Get a large survival or K-bar style knife you can stick in your boot. This will be your screwdriver, can opener, toothpick and surgical knife all in one. Be sure to find one with a thick blade that can be used to open up panels and jimmy locks. It needs to be strong enough to make a hole for the crowbar to get into. If you keep it hidden in your boot under your pants leg, most people won't see it or look for it, so it is a great backup as well. **Cost:** \$200-\$300; half that used. **Damage:** 1D6+1.

**Box Cutter (various):** Cost: \$1-\$5. **Damage:** 1D4.

**Grappling Hook & Line:** This is your typical grappling hook and line for scaling surfaces. **Range:** 100 feet (30.5 m). **Damage:** 1D4. **Weight:** 2 pounds (0.9 kg). **Cost:** \$150 for hook and 300 feet (91.5 m) of line.

**Knife, Combat Bush/Survival:** Heavy-duty, all-purpose survival knife. The best carbon steel, 7 inch blade. **Cost:** \$200-\$300. **Damage:** 1D6+1; also has a serrated edge for sawing.

**Knife, Kukri:** A heavy, curved knife from India and Africa for chopping and slashing 8-9 inch blade. **Cost:** \$175-\$300. **Damage:** 1D6+1.

**Knife, Slimpack Throwing:** With a flat, lambskin sheath, this knife is perfect for concealment. Also a perfectly balanced 6 inch blade (0.15 m). **Cost:** \$50. **Damage:** 1D6.

**Knife, Throwing Set:** 4 ultrathin throwing knives in a single belt sheath designed for an easy, fast draw. **Cost:** \$135. **Damage:** 1D4.

**Knife, Polycarbonate:** This 7 inch knife (with silk sheath) is guaranteed not to show up on metal detectors. Balanced for throwing, yet with a keen edge for slicing. **Cost:** \$300. **Damage:** 1D6.



**Spear:** Limited effectiveness against zombies. **Cost:** \$50-\$200. **Damage:** 2D4 (sharp end) and 1D6 (blunt end).

**Swords:** Not all swords are created equal, and while most share the common goal of killing people, they tend to go about it in different ways. It is important to identify the purpose of the sword you select, so you don't end up in a situation where you are using the wrong tool for the job.

The standard European one-handed, long sword was a thrusting weapon. It has a thick blade, triangular, designed to punch through heavy plate armor or mail. It also has dual blades for

unarmored opponents, but it was not intended to be used as a slashing or chopping weapon. Consequently, the shape of the blade gets stuck in bone and armor and zombies when used as a slashing or chopping weapon, but comes out cleanly when used as a thrusting weapon. Problem is, thrusts inflict *half damage* to zombies and there is a 01-60% chance that a stabbing weapon gets *stuck in* the zombie. To keep the weapon the attacker must pull it out. This uses up one melee attack/action to yank it out, the attacker loses initiative, and the zombie has those few moments to attack his assailant.

The best weapons to use are blunt items, curved blades, and guns that inflict heavy damage.

Curved blades, including the *Kukri* (a large, heavy chopping knife), *machete* (chopping short sword), *Katana* (curved long sword), *Wakizashi* (curved short sword) and many other curved swords from Asia, Africa, the Middle East and India are designed to fight against lightly armored, or unarmored opponents. The curve of the blade allows it to act as a lever if stuck, and also drives the opponent away when swung. The shape of the blade profile also allows the weapon to release itself easily from a slashing attack. This is why I (the Brick) suggest one of these blades if you are going to keep a sword around. Even the cheap kind you used to find in pawnshops, flea markets and street festivals are more than up to the task of removing the arms and legs of the walking dead.

Oh, and if you do stumble across a *Falchion*, grab it. This is the European equivalent to the *Katana*, and was widely used during the Crusades as it combined the power of an axe with the speed and flexibility of a sword. Again, won't work well against a guy in plate armor or plate and chain, but it will cut down a zombie faster than you can say Shakespeare.

**Curved Short Sword (Scimitar/Saber/Cavalry/Sickle Swords):** **Cost:** \$150-\$500. **Damage:** 1D6 is typical (1D8 or 2D4 is for the rare, larger short sword). Ideal for fighting zombies.

**Falchion (a wicked short sword; partial curved blade):** **Cost:** \$300-\$600. **Damage:** 2D4. Ideal for fighting zombies.

**Katana (curved Japanese long sword):** **Cost:** \$400-\$1,200. **Damage:** 2D4+2. Ideal for fighting zombies.

**Large Swords (straight):** Bastard sword, broadsword, long sword, etc., one or two-handed European sword. **Cost:** \$250-\$600. **Damage:** 2D4 is typical (Claymore does 2D6, and a Flamberge does 3D8 damage). **Note:** Has a 01-66% chance of getting stuck in the zombie.

**Machete:** A light, short sword designed for chopping through underbrush and sugar cane. It is also ideal for fighting zombies. **Cost:** \$40-\$80. **Damage:** 1D6.

**Rapier (straight, long and thin):** **Cost:** \$200-\$300. **Damage:** 1D8. **Note:** Has a 01-50% chance of getting stuck in the zombie.

**Short Sword (straight):** **Cost:** \$100-\$300. **Damage:** 1D6. **Note:** Has a 01-60% chance of getting stuck in the zombie.

**Wakizashi (curved Japanese short sword):** **Cost:** \$200-\$600. **Damage:** 1D6+1. Ideal for fighting zombies.

**Chainsaws:** This modern invention is a blessing and a curse. Nothing, and I mean nothing, will let you cut through a crowd of the undead like a 21 inch (0.6 m), 3HP, tree eating chainsaw. The problem is nothing will draw a crowd of zombies better

than the noise from that same chainsaw, and the mess is disgusting. If you do use one, make sure it is a last resort, because when you start to make all that noise you will draw the undead out of the woodwork. **Cost:** \$75-\$130. **Damage:** 3D6.

**Tree Trimming Saw:** If you make your way through a home and garden section of your favorite home repair store, grab a limb trimming chainsaw. While they lack the serious horsepower of the standard saws, you gain 6+ feet (1.8 m) of reach. These are great if you have a second story balcony or roof you can get to. Makes clearing a door or window much easier and safer. **Cost:** \$40-\$75. **Damage:** 1D6.

## Body Armor

### Custom Built Armor (full suits)

These are homemade suits of armor based on or inspired by real world armor throughout history.

The best all around armor for engaging zombies is *leather*. Leather is comparatively light, durable, and zombies cannot bite or claw through it. Leather armor with metal, ceramic or plastic reinforcement (plating at the top of the forearms, elbows, shoulders and knees, maybe even the chest or neck) is ideal. Add sap gloves (leather gloves with lead across the top of the hand), heavy boots, and some combat gear and you are good to go 12 rounds with a zombie.

Quilted or Padded Cloth Armor: A.R. 8. S.D.C. 15. Prowl/Movement Penalty: None. Cost: \$150.

Soft Leather Armor: A.R. 9. S.D.C. 20. Prowl/Movement Penalty: None. Cost: \$250-\$500. Very effective against zombies (equivalent of an A.R. 12).

Hard Leather Armor: A.R. 11. S.D.C. 35. Prowl/Movement Penalty (a bit heavy and stiff): -10%, Cost: \$350-\$600 (reinforced hard leather chest armor, and forearm, elbow, and shoulder plates).

Studded Leather Armor: A.R. 12. S.D.C. 38. Prowl/Movement Penalty: -5%, Cost: \$350-\$600.

Leather Studded and Padded Armor: A.R. 12. S.D.C. 45. Prowl/Movement Penalty: -5%, Cost: \$500-\$700.

Leather and Modern Reinforced Armor: A.R. 13. S.D.C. 65. Prowl/Movement Penalty: -10%, Cost: \$800-\$1,000 (reinforced with plastic, metal or ceramic plates at the forearms, elbows, shoulders, and knees).

Chain Mail Armor (with Padded Undergarment): A.R. 14. S.D.C. 50. Prowl/Movement Penalty: -15% (heavy). Cost: \$800-\$1,000.

Modern Chain Mail Equivalent – Shark Bite Armor: A.R. 14. S.D.C. 60. Prowl/Movement Penalty: -20% (heavy). Cost: \$1,600-\$3,000; rare.

Scale Mail Armor: A.R. 15. S.D.C. 100. Prowl/Movement Penalty: -25% (heavy). Cost: \$1200-1,600.

Plastic Plate Armor: A.R. 13. S.D.C. 60. Prowl/Movement Penalty: -15% (hard and stiff). Cost \$1,000-\$1,800.

Plate Mail Armor: A.R. 16. S.D.C. 150. Prowl/Movement & Spd Penalty: -40% (heavy and stiff) on skills like Acrobatics, Climb, Prowl, Swim, and reduce Spd by 40%. Cost: \$1,800-\$3,000.

## Head Protection

Motorcycle Helmet: Common, affordable, plentiful. A.R. 14. S.D.C. of Helmet: 50. Cost: \$150-\$300.

Bicycling Helmet (padded): Common, affordable, plentiful. A.R. 10. S.D.C. of Helmet: 15. Cost: \$30-\$60.

Bicycling and Skateboard Pads for the elbows and knees: A.R. 10, S.D.C. per pad: 10. Cost: \$10-\$20 each.

## Modern Body Armor

These are suits of armor used by the police and military (SWAT, Riot Control, etc.); availability is limited to police and military caches at station houses, armories, and military bases. Only occasionally are a few (1D4) found at a gun shop or the back of a squad care (01-25% chance). Half suits or vests are effective against zombies, because the walking dead tend to strike the upper body and neck. Increase the A.R. of vests by two points (to A.R. 12) when battling zombies. All weigh 10-12 pounds (4.5 to 5.4 kg).

Half Suit/Vest, Concealed: A.R. 10, S.D.C. 50. Prowl/Movement Penalty: None. Cost: \$1,200-\$1,400. Note: This armor is very thin and can be worn underneath an ordinary shirt, suit coat or jacket without being obvious. You are paying for the concealment.

Half Suit/Vest, Riot Jacket (with pockets): A.R. 10. S.D.C. 60. Prowl/Movement Penalty: None. Cost: \$750-\$900.

Half Suit/Vest, Flak Vest: A.R. 10. S.D.C. 50. Prowl/Movement Penalty: None. Cost: \$600-\$800.

Half Suit/Vest, Point-Blank Vest: A.R. 10, S.D.C. 70. Prowl/Movement Penalty: -5%. Cost: \$900-\$1,200.

Half Suit, Hard Armor Vest: A.R. 12, S.D.C. 120. Prowl/Movement Penalty: -5%, Cost: \$1,200-\$1,600.

Full Suit, Fragmentation Cape/Vest (looks like a poncho): A.R. 13, S.D.C. 120. Prowl/Movement Penalty: -10%. Cost: \$1,200-\$1,500.

Full Suit, Riot Armor: A.R. 14. S.D.C. 180. Prowl/Movement Penalty: -12%. Cost: \$1,400-\$1,800.

Full Suit, Hard Armor: A.R. 16. S.D.C. 260. Prowl/Movement Penalty: -15%, Cost: \$2,000-\$3,500.

Full Suit, Class 4 Armor: A.R. 17, S.D.C. 280. Prowl/Movement Penalty: -20%, Cost: \$2,800 to \$4,500.

## Optics

**Binoculars and Telescopic** sights magnify an image area through a system of lenses.

Cost:

Binocular (2000 feet/610 m), best magnification: \$1000-\$1,600.

Binocular (1600 feet/488 m), medium magnification: \$600-1000.

Binocular (1600 feet/488 m), low magnification: \$120-\$600.

Weapon Sight, best magnification: \$1,200.

Weapon Sight, medium magnification: \$600.

Weapon Sight, low magnification: \$250.

**Infrared Optic System:** **Range:** 1,200 feet (366 m). This type of optical enhancement device relies on a source of infrared

light, usually a pencil-thin beam of light projected from the goggle or binoculars, to illuminate its targets. The narrowness of the beam severely limits the scope of one's view to a small area of about 18 square feet (two square meters). This can make surveying a large area a problem. Another drawback is that the infrared light beam is clearly visible to another infrared optic system, giving away the operator's position. These drawbacks are inherent to ALL infrared systems. **Cost:** Around \$1000; fair availability. **Note:** Zombies have no heat signature and cannot be detected with this heat optics system.

Cost:

Goggles (mercury battery type) – \$550.

Goggles (new superior type) – \$880.

Binoculars – \$2,100.

Monocular Eyepiece – \$800.

Weapon Sight – \$1200.

**Infrared Distancing Binoculars:** A high-powered optical enhancement device with infrared adjustments, cross hair indicator lines, and digital readout of estimated distance and rate of travel. **Range:** 2 miles (3.2 km). The I.D. binoculars enjoy extreme popularity among spies, being used for field work and exploration, and are also used by the military. **Cost:** \$3,200-\$6,000. Not commercially available. **Note:** Zombies have no heat signature and cannot be detected with this heat optics system.

**Illuminating Peglight:** Designed for military use as markers for routes and minefields. Emits beta light which gives off no heat and no infrared emissions. Can be seen from distances of up to 150 feet (45.7 m). **Cost:** \$50 each. Poor availability.

**Laser Sights:** These small targeting systems fit on all firearms. They project a laser beam that produces a red dot on the target, showing approximately where the bullet will hit. Laser sights add +1 to all firearms rolls, including bursts, but their range is limited to 200 feet (61 m). **Cost:** \$200-\$500. Fair availability.

**Nightsight:** **Range:** 1,600 feet (488 m). A passive night-vision optics system is an image intensifier, meaning that it is a passive system that does not emit any light of its own, but electronically amplifies existing, ambient light to provide a visible picture. **Cost:** \$1,200-\$2,000; fair availability.

Cost:

Goggles – \$4,000-\$5,200.

Binoculars – \$6,400.

Monocular Eyepiece – \$1,000-1,900.

Weapon Sight – \$2,000-\$3,500.

Pocket Night Viewer (800 feet/244 m range) – \$900-\$1,500.

Large Tripod Mount – \$8,000-12,000.

**Pocket Night Viewer:** **Range:** 800 feet (244 m). This is a mini-night sight, usually a monocular style, easily concealed and portable. **Cost:** \$800; poor availability.

**Pocket Range Finder:** An optical range finder that is compact and easy to use. Just look through the viewfinder and adjust the focus knob until the image is clear. The range in feet AND meters will appear below the target. **Cost:** \$58.

**Thermal-Imager:** **Range:** 1600 feet (488 m). Basically an optical heat sensor, it converts the infrared radiation of warm

objects into a visible image. This device allows its operator to see in darkness, shadows and through smoke. Battery powered and electrically cooled. A typical running life is 16 hours. **Cost:** \$1,400-\$2,000; poor availability. **Note:** Zombies have no heat signature and cannot be detected with this heat optics system.

Costs:

Goggles – \$15,000-\$20,000.

Binoculars – \$12,000-\$16,000.

Monocular Eyepiece – \$15,000-\$18,000.

Weapon Sight – \$10,000-8,000.

**Ultraviolet System:** **Range:** 400 feet (122 m). Enables its wearer to see into the ultraviolet range of light radiation. It's usually integrated into a larger optics package rather than used alone. **Cost:** \$500-\$1000.

## Generators & Electronics

Running a generator to live a pre-Zombie Apocalypse lifestyle requires a lot of generating power, and enormous fuel stores. This is why so many post-Wave survivors simply go without most electric conveniences of yesteryear. As the old Survivor saying about electricity goes, "When in doubt, go without." **Note:** Electricity requirements for a common electric range or refrigerator is 12,000 watts (12 KW).

**Generator, Small:** Uses 8 horsepower to generate 4 kilowatts of energy. **Weight:** 115 lbs (52 kg). **Cost:** \$400-\$600.

**Generator, Medium:** Uses 15 hp to generate 8 KW. **Weight:** 230 lbs (104 kg). **Cost:** \$900-\$1,400.

**Generator, Large:** Uses 25 hp to generate 15 KW. **Weight:** 460 lbs (207 kg.) **Cost:** \$1,100-\$1,800.

**Generator, Heavy (Commercial Grade):** Uses 225 hp to generate 95 KW. **Weight:** 2,200 lbs (990 kg). **Cost:** \$5,500-\$8,500.

**Hot Water Heater:** (250 watts/0.25 KW) per gallon (3.78 liters), for an average of 10,000 watts (10 KW). **Cost:** \$200.

**Conventional 35mm Camera:** Takes 35mm film. **Cost:** \$350-\$2,000.

**Conventional 35mm or Digital Camera, Disposable:** **Cost:** \$5-\$12.

**Digital Camera:** Battery operated and plug in. **Cost:** \$200-\$1,000.

**Computer, Value Priced/Rebuilt:** \$300-\$600.

**Computer, High End:** \$900-1,600.

**Laptop Computer, Value Priced/Rebuilt:** \$1,200-\$1,800.

**Laptop Computer, High End:** \$2,000-4,000.

**Monitor: Basic Color:** \$150-\$300.

**Monitor: Large Console:** \$300-\$450.

**Monitor: Flat Screen:** \$500-\$1,200.

**Printer, Basic:** \$130-\$200.

**Printer, Quality:** \$280-\$500.

**Printer, Top Quality:** \$500-\$1000.

**Space Heater, Electric:** 1,200 watts (1.2 KW). **Cost:** \$30-\$100.

**Space Heater, Kerosene:** \$50-\$90.

**Tape Recorder** – 60 minutes recording time; pocket size. **Cost:** \$60-\$120.

**Toaster:** (1,200 watts 1.2 KW). **Cost:** \$15-\$30.

**Wash Drier:** 500 watts 0.5 KW). **Cost:** \$500-\$1,200.

**Washing Machine:** 500 watts (0.5 KW). **Cost:** \$500-\$1,200.

## Field Equipment & Misc. Gear

**Batteries:** Varies with size and type: 12 Nine-Volt, AAA to D. **Cost:** \$8-\$12; triple for rechargeable batteries. Car Battery: **Cost:** \$50-\$120.

**Bolt-Cutters:** A 3-4 foot (1-1.2 m) long tool that resembles a pair of hedge trimmers with a small, heavy-duty cutting head designed for cutting through bolts and locks (all types). Cuts through them with one melee action. Excellent for scavenging city ruins. **Cost:** \$60-\$100.

**Camouflage Paint Kit:** 4 spray cans plus 6 stencils allow for easy camouflaging of vehicles, bunkers, and any field equipment. One kit will cover approximately 100 square feet (9 sq. m) of surface. Available in jungle, forest or arctic. **Cost:** \$35.

**Camouflage Tape:** The ever popular duct tape. Comes in rolls 26 feet (7.9 m) long and two inches (5 cm) wide. Available in jungle, forest or desert camouflage, or in olive drab. **Cost:** \$6 per roll.

**Camouflage Compact:** A one-man kit for camouflage or night operations. Includes enough face and hand paint for 6 applications. Mirror, brush and disposable cleaning pads are also included in a neat, black case, 4 inches in diameter and 1/2 inch high (10x1.3 cm). **Cost:** \$18-\$24 each.

**Camouflage Netting:** This stuff is great for quick easy concealment in the wild, in city parks, and even in fields and behind bushes. Throw a blanket-sized sheet of netting over a bicycles or motorcycle, and it is difficult to notice unless one is really looking around. Can also be used for making hunting blinds. Made from durable, long lasting material. **Cost:** \$30-\$50 for a blanket-sized sheet large enough to cover a sofa (or motorcycle), half that to cover a bicycle. each. Approximately \$8 per square yard/meter of netting.

**Candle** – Candle sticks; burns for one hour. **Cost:** \$8-\$20 per dozen. Larger, longer burning (4-6 hours) candles are also available. **Cost:** \$8-\$20 for one.

**Cattle Prod:** An electric rod, operated on “C” cell batteries, that emits a 4500 volt shock when it is touched to the skin. 12 or 22 inch (30 or 56 cm) lengths. **Cost:** \$20. **Damage:** 1D4; no effect on zombies.

**Chemical Mace:** A stinging chemical spray that blinds one’s opponent (much better than hair spray). Victims are -6 to strike, parry and dodge. **Range:** 4-6 feet (1.2 to 1.8 m). **Duration:** 4D4 melees. **Cost:** \$15-\$20. Twenty sprays before empty; no effect on zombies.

**Climbing Kit:** A complete set of equipment for rappelling, rock scaling or climbing. Includes 3,600 foot (1100 m) reels of 4500 pound (20,000 Newton) test rope (each reel weighs 40 pounds/18 kg). An adjustable harness, 6 pairs of canvas climbing gloves, 48 clamps, 48 fasteners, 48 pitons, 3 hammers, 2 grappling hooks, and one pulley. Weight with shipping crate is 190 pounds (86 kg). **Cost:** \$1100.

**Ear Protector Headphones:** The answer to the demo expert’s and grenadier’s dreams. The same model is used by air-

port workers to preserve hearing in noisy environments. **Cost:** \$35-\$60.

**Flashlight – Small:** \$4-\$8.

**Flashlight – Medium:** \$8-\$15.

**Flashlight – Large:** \$15-\$25.

**Flashlight – Unbreakable (Kel-lite):** Small \$24, Medium \$30, Large \$40 (does 1D4 damage as a blunt weapon), and Very Large \$50 (does 1D6 damage as a blunt weapon).

**Flashlight – Unbreakable & Rechargeable:** 10 times brighter than most conventional types; quartz-halogen bulb, 12 inches (30 cm), 1.8 pounds (0.8 kg), 20,000 candlepower: **Cost:** \$120-\$150. A larger, 35,000 candlepower: **Cost:** \$150-\$200.

**Gas Mask:** Filter out CS, smoke and a variety of military gases. Note: Not recommended as protection against nerve gas or radiation. **Cost:** \$50.00.

**Halogen Spotlight, Portable:** 50,000 candlepower. **Cost:** \$30-\$50.

**Handcuffs, Regular:** Police style, 60 S.D.C. **Cost:** \$25-\$40.

**Handcuffs, Heavy:** Police style, 120 S.D.C. **Cost:** \$50-\$100.

**Handheld Treated Torch:** Burns for 1D6x10+30 minutes. **Cost:** \$8-\$15.

**Medical Bag/Kit:** This 8 pound (3.6 kg) bag is a complete medic’s field kit. Included are adhesive pads, bandages, gauze pads, adhesive tape, splints, sterile gloves, scissors, forceps, thermometer, needle, razor blades, pins, medicine, ointment, and salt tablets. Bag has backpack and shoulder straps, and is available in choice of camouflage, green or khaki. **Cost:** \$275-\$350.

**Nylon Cord:** A variety of heavy-duty, all-purpose, nylon rope or cord is available. Average tension strength is 600 pounds (2670 Newtons). Average length is 300 feet (91 m). **Cost:** about \$100. Good availability.

**Oil Lantern:** 6 hours of light, 1 pint (0.47 liters). **Cost:** \$20-\$40.

**Oil Lantern:** 12 hours of light, 2 pints (0.91 liters). **Cost:** \$40-\$100.

**Oil Lamp:** 6 hours of light, 1 pint. **Cost:** \$20-\$60.

**Padlock, Light** – 25 S.D.C. **Cost:** \$4-\$6.

**Padlock, Medium** – 50 S.D.C. **Cost:** \$8-\$10.

**Padlock, Heavy** – 75 S.D.C. **Cost:** \$15-\$20.

**Padlock, Burglar Proof:** -65% to Pick Lock skill; 80 S.D.C. **Cost:** \$30-\$60.

**Protective Goggles:** \$10.

**Rations (food):** Dry field rations; each 15 pound (6.8 kg) case includes 12 meals. Crate is stocked with 12 cases, and has a total shipping weight of 200 pounds (90 kg). **Cost:** \$470.00.

**Sunglasses, Light Adjusting:** Varies with quality. **Cost:** \$15-\$280.

**Shooting Glasses:** Change color and density in response to changes in light and weather. Also reduce glare and improve visibility. **Cost:** \$70-\$110.

**S.W.A.T. Entry Tool, a.k.a. Hooligan Tool:** A long, one inch (2.5 cm) thick, stress-proof bar, heat treated for durability and strength. On one end is a large chisel, spike-like, pry bar. On the opposite end is a claw/chisel-point (crowbar-like). Used to pry open security doors and grilles. **Cost:** \$240-\$300. **Damage:** 1D8 (either end), but not suitable as a weapon. Pops nor-



mal door locks on a roll to strike of 8-20; pops heavy locks and security door locks on a roll to strike of 12-20.

**Radio: Field:** Backpack sized, long-range radio with directional and relay capabilities. Range: 50-100 miles (80 to 160 km). **Cost:** \$300-\$800.

**Radio: Walkie-Talkie:** Since the cell towers went down, maintaining communication has been critical. Rescue and firefighters have continued to use long-range two-way radios for communication, these don't rely on towers or relay stations but only have a range of about 2-5 miles (3.2 to 8 km). Keep an eye out for them when making runs. **Cost:** \$35-\$75 each for a cheap but reliable walkie-talkie (half the range and 1D6+6 S.D.C.), or \$450 to \$1,000 each for the good stuff (full range, 2D6+20 S.D.C., impact resistant and water resistant).

**Rope:** Rope and cord have all kinds of practical uses. Keep a good 20-50 foot (6.1 to 15.2 m) length of rope with you, or tie it to the back of your bike for when you need it. Zombies can't untie rope, so it is just as good as chain in most cases for locking doors and securing fences, or even tying up zombies. They'll chew through rope, but it takes them 2D6+10 minutes to do it. Rope and cord are a far more versatile tool than most people give it credit for. **Cost:** \$10-\$50; varies with type, strength and length.

**Spike, Wood:** 6-12 inches long. May be used to spike or prop doors and windows opened or closed, secure a tent, for climbing, etc. **Cost:** \$1-\$2 each.

**Spike, Metal:** 6-12 inches long. May be used to spike or prop doors and windows opened or closed, secure a tent, for climbing, etc. **Cost:** \$3-\$4 each.

**Tool Kit, large:** Claw hammer, set of screwdrivers, set of adjustable wrenches, socket wrench and modular heads, pliers, wire cutters, box cutter, battery operated drill with set of drill and screwdriver bits, hacksaw, box of 2D4x10 nails, 2D4x10 screws, level, 25 foot (7.6 m) tape measure, roll of duct tape, roll of masking tape, small note pad, one black marker, mechanical pencil, 1D4 pieces of white chalk, and has space for more. Weight: 20 lbs. (9 kg). **Cost:** \$100.

**Wire Cutters:** 8 inch (20 cm) wire-cutter has nonconducting handles to avoid the nasty "shock" of electrified fences. Complete with belt sheath. **Cost:** \$35-60.

## Hunting, Trapping, Hiking & Camping Gear

Backpack, Large – \$140–\$250.

Backpack, Small – \$50-\$80.

Bedroll – \$60-\$120.

Bear Trap – \$180.

Beaver Trap – \$60.

Blanket, Heavy – \$20.

Blanket, Light – \$10.

Bow Hunter Accessory Bag – \$40.

Camouflage Netting – \$8 per square yard/meter.

Canteen: Aluminum – \$30.

Canteen: Plastic – \$20.

Chain, heavy, per foot (0.3 m) – \$7.

Chain, light, per foot (0.3 m) – \$2-\$3.

Climbing Platform: Used by deer hunters to help climb and stand in trees. Gets them above the line of sight and reduces the chance of being scented. Portable; 100% high carbon steel.

**Small:** 16x19 in/41x48 cm platform, 200 lbs (90 kg) capacity: \$40.

**Medium:** 17x24 in/43x61 cm platform, 350 lbs (157 kg) capacity: \$60.

**Heavy:** 20x26 in/51x66 cm platform, 1,000 lbs (450 kg) capacity: \$80.

Compass – \$50-\$300.

Disposable Lighter – \$1-\$2.

Reusable Lighter – \$12-\$50.

Lighter Fluid (16 ounces/0.47 liters) – \$6-\$10.

Fishing Line per 50 feet (15 m) – \$5-\$8.

Fishing Net – \$20-\$30.

Fishing Rod and Reel – \$30-\$70.

Grappling Hook and Line: 250 feet (76 m) – \$80.

Hammock – \$50.00

Hat, Safari type – \$45-\$80.

Insect Repellent – \$4-\$8.

Knife: Survival – \$120.

Mosquito Netting per square yard/meter – \$12.

Pillow – \$10.

Rabbit Trap – \$40.

Rain Poncho with a hood: Cheap, folds up small, \$6-\$15, but wears out (tears and tatters) after 18-24 uses. Durable, heavier material, folds up but not as compact, lasts for years. **Cost:** \$35-\$75.

Rappelling Equipment: Including spikes, mallet, hooks, pulley, straps, harness, gloves, boots, backpack, etc. – \$1000-\$1,400.

Rope Ladder, per 10 feet (3 m) – \$40.

Rope, per 10 feet (3 m) – \$10.

Shovel, Folding – \$15-\$30 (does 1D4 damage as a weapon).

Shovel, Large – \$25-\$40 (does 1D8 damage as a weapon).

Sleeping Bag – \$150.

Snare Cord, per square yard/meter – \$5.

Tackle Box – \$20.

Tent Canvas, per square yard/meter – \$20.

Tent, Four Man – \$260.

Tent, One Man – \$110.

Tent, Military Command Post (25 pounds/11 kg, 8x8 foot floor, 5 foot ceiling/2.4x2.4x1.5 m; camouflage, green or khaki) – \$400

Tent, Two Man – \$180.

Utensil Kit (knife, fork, spoon set with sheath) – \$25.

Wolf Trap – \$160.

## Containers

Back Pack – \$60.

Belt Purse/Pouch (attaches to belt) – \$10.

Cask, Wooden, 10 gallons (38 liters) – \$40.

Cask, Wooden, 25 gallons (95 liters) – \$60.

Cask, Wooden, 4 gallons (15 liters) – \$30.  
 Cloth Handle Bag – \$10.  
 Crate, Large Wood – \$50.  
 Crate, Medium Wood – \$30.  
 Crate, Small Wood – \$20.  
 Jar: 1 gallon (3.8 liters) – \$10.  
 Jar: 2 pints (0.9 liters) – \$2-\$5.  
 Jar: 4 pints (1.9 liters) – \$4-\$7.  
 Jar, Glass: 1 pint (473 ml) – \$4-\$6.  
 Jug: 1/2 gallon (1.9 liters) – \$20.  
 Jug: 1 gallon (3.8 liters) – \$35.  
 Jug: 5 gallons (19 liters) – \$60.  
 Knapsack – \$25-\$60.  
 Metal Security Box, Large, 15 lbs (6.8 kg), 90 S.D.C. – \$80.  
 Metal Security Box, Small, 5 lbs (2.3 kg), 30 S.D.C. – \$40.  
 Metal Trunk, Large, 80 lbs (36 kg), 200 S.D.C. – \$500.  
 Metal Trunk, Small, 35 lbs (16 kg), 100 S.D.C. – \$250.  
 Pocket Purse, Small – \$5.  
 Sack, Large – \$15.  
 Sack, Medium – \$10.  
 Sack, Small – \$6.  
 Saddle (horse) – \$100-\$500.  
 Saddlebag (horse) – \$100-\$200.  
 Safe, Large, 300 lbs (135 kg), 1000 S.D.C. – \$2000.  
 Safe, Small, 50 lbs (23 kg), 350 S.D.C. – \$900.  
 Shoulder Purse or Duffle Bag, Large – \$45-\$100.  
 Shoulder Purse or Duffle Bag, Small – \$20-\$50.  
 Thermos, 25 fl. oz. (0.74 liters) – \$15-\$30  
 Thermos, 1 gallon (3.8 liters) – \$40-\$70.  
 Tobacco Pouch – \$20.  
 Trunk, Large Wood, 50 lbs (23 kg), 70 S.D.C. – \$200.  
 Trunk, Small Wood, 25 lbs (11 kg), 30 S.D.C. – \$80.  
 Vial, Glass, 2 ounce (59 ml) – \$4.  
 Waterskin, 1/2 gallon (1.9 liters) – \$30.  
 Waterskin, 1 gallon (3.8 liters) – \$50.00  
 Waterskin, 2 pints (0.9 liters) – \$20.00

## Transportation

### Horses

Motorized vehicles are largely available but horses also have their place as work and riding animals. Furthermore, they too are targeted by the walking dead and need to be saved.

Contrary to what many gamers may think, a horse is *not* a lawn mower with legs. A horse can eat grass, weeds and other vegetation, but it takes a much longer time to digest and therefore, the horse can't function at full capacity. A horse on a varied diet of oats, grass and hay will move 10% slower. A horse on a steady diet of grass and/or hay will run a full 25% slower because such food just isn't as nutritional or filling. It would be like you or I living just on bread and water – it would keep us alive, but with very little energy. On the other hand, a diet of

oats, barley and other grains, though more expensive, will help keep the animal healthy and operating at top efficiency. Grooming and proper watering are also important for the animal's well-being.

**Average Horse: Size:** 56-60 inches (1.4 to 1.5 m) at the shoulder. **Weight:** 1,100-1,400 lbs (495-630 kg). **Hit Points.:** 4D6+6. **S.D.C.:** 5D6+12. **Attacks per Melee:** Two. **Damage:** 2D6 kick, 4D6 rear kick, 1D4 bite. **Bonuses:** +2 on initiative, +2 to strike, +4 to dodge. **Natural Abilities:** Swim 50%, Jump 4-5 feet (1.2-1.5 m) high and 10 feet (3 m) long. Can carry up to 500 lbs (225 kg) and can pull 800-1,200 lbs (360-540 kg). **Speed:** 35 mph (56 km) for extended periods, 45 mph (72 km) sprints. **Average Life Span:** 12 years. **Cost:** \$1,000-\$4,000.

### Bicycles

It's not glamorous, but you'll thank me for it later. The beautiful things about a bicycle are that it doesn't need fuel (just leg power), it is silent, lightweight, you can carry it above your head when you have to, it fits through narrow spaces and, if you get a good, sturdy, all-purpose bike, it is effective on the street, dirt roads, gravel, grass and wilderness. Silence is always important in urban settings and reconnaissance expeditions, and riding a bike is better and faster than walking and you can out peddle most zombies, crazy people and bandits. You still have to worry about Fast Attack Zombies, wild dogs and adversaries on motorcycles, but a bicycle is a good method of transportation.

Of course, like everything else in our modern world, there were all types of specialty bikes. Forget racing bikes, they are best suited to paved roads and are too fragile. Personally, I like mountain bikes, but just go with something basic and reliable. Strap a spare water bottle to it, carry a spare inner tube or two, a tire pump and a simple tool kit and you are good to go. **A.R.:** 7. **S.D.C.:** Tires (2) – 6 each. Main Body – 40-70 depending on the type of bicycle. **Cost:** \$60-\$450.

### Skateboards

Skateboards are definitely not for everyone, but they are worth mentioning. I've seen young Scroungers ripping down city streets, ducking around Slouchers, riding up curbs, sliding down railings and hopping over Crawlers. Skateboards are comparatively quiet, lightweight, portable, and easy to maintain. Skilled skateboarders are highly maneuverable with them and they increase your running speed by three times. Me, I'd break my neck just trying to stand on one, but if you're good on a board, use it. **A.R.:** 6. **S.D.C.:** 25. **Cost:** \$150-\$300 for a quality board.

### Motorcycles

Riding before the apocalypse was dangerous, and in a major city downright suicidal. But with the right equipment, training and awareness, riding a bike can be the safest means of transportation going. Bikes are agile and quick, they can get you out of tight places and across impassible terrain if you know how to ride. Before you run out and hop on a bike you should know a few things. First, it is not a question of if you are going to drop your bike, it is when. Second, everything is bigger than you so don't get cocky. I can ride my KLR up one side of a car and down the other, climb stairs and go up three foot (0.9 m) vertical



embankments. I have also had a face full of gravel from hitting a squirrel. Don't take unnecessary chances, avoid riding into large groups of zombies, and stay aware of your surroundings.

Choosing the right bike for the job is critical and your life depends on you making the correct choice. Every bike has advantages and disadvantages depending on what you intend to do. How much the bike can haul, how much it weighs, parts availability, the bike's range and its ability to handle terrain are just some of the important factors to consider. I have put down my thoughts here on the more common bikes I have seen guys ride, or try to adapt to live with the undead. This is just my opinion, but I have lasted this long so something must be right about it.

## Street Bikes

It's really easy to get sucked into the allure of a slick street bike. Sexy faring, comfortable riding position, and a chassis that tells you, "You can do anything stud, keep on leaning." Yeah, they are sex on wheels, but sure as your denim jeans they will get you killed faster than any other bike. These bikes will take you right out to the edge of riding where the only thing keeping you stuck to the ground is a quarter inch of black rubber while you drag your knee around the corner at speeds so fast you can't see anything but the blur of the road. All the time that bike will keep asking you for more. The problem is, that same bike has zero tolerance for mistakes. These bikes will turn you into a hockey puck before you blink. If you do pick a bike like that, be sure you know what you are getting into. They are fast, real fast, nimble and can get in and out before anything else. But they also can't carry much, break apart easy when laid down and don't provide any protection.

When I have taken a **crotch rocket** out, I have always grabbed a *Motard*. These are the SUV crossovers of the bike world. Kinda like an enduro chassis with street tires, but engine and tuning of a sport bike. With longer suspension travel and lighter weight, these bikes are more adaptable than their speed demon brothers. But when it comes to speed and agility, you won't find anything that will perform better than a street bike. All weigh in the 500-700 lbs (225 to 315 kg) range.

### **Suzuki Hayabusa**

Manufacturer: Suzuki Motorcycle Company.

Class: Sport Bike.

Crew: One plus one passenger.

S.D.C. By Location:

Tires (2) – 20 each

Main Body – 150

Maximum Speed: 198 mph (317 km).

Miles per Gallon (mpg): 40 mpg (64 km).

Fuel Tank: 5.5 gallons (20.8 liters).

Bonuses: +15% to high speed maneuvering, +5 to stunt riding (-5% with passenger), and +5% on stability rolls due to weight.

Cargo: 200 lbs (90 kg) without penalty in addition to driver.

Note: In all cases, -10% to piloting skill for every 50 lbs (22.5 kg) over the cargo limit.

Cost: \$12,000 pre-apocalypse.

### **Kawasaki Ninja 650R**

Manufacturer: Kawasaki Motors Corporation.

Class: Sport Bike.

Crew: One plus one passenger.

S.D.C. By Location:

Tires (2) – 18 each

Main Body – 125

Maximum Speed: 140 mph (224 km).

Miles per Gallon: 55 mpg (88 km).

Fuel Tank: 4.1 gallons (15.5 liters).

Bonuses: +10% to high speed maneuvering and +10% to stunt riding (-5% with passenger).

Cargo: 200 lbs (90 kg) in addition to driver without penalty.

Cost: \$8,000 pre-apocalypse.

### **Buell 1125R**

Manufacturer: Buell Motorcycles U.S.A.

Class: Sport Bike.

Crew: One plus one passenger.

S.D.C. By Location:

Tires (2) – 22 each

Main Body – 200

Maximum Speed: 170 mph (272 km)

Miles per Gallon: 40 mpg (64 km).

Fuel Tank: 5.3 gallons (20 liters).

Bonuses: +10% to high speed maneuvering, +5 to stunt riding, +5% on stability rolls due to weight.

Cargo: 350 lbs (157.5 kg) without penalty in addition to the driver.

Cost: \$12,000 pre-apocalypse.

## Cruisers, Choppers, Bobbers

**Harleys and street cruisers** are big and heavy (800-1,300 lbs/360 to 585 kg), but they offer a lot of protection from the elements, road debris, and the occasional zombie. With big faring and lots of storage, the hulks are harder to knock down, can carry a lot (400 lbs/180 kg) and will go long distances. But when the hog goes down, it stays down. It is not easy to pick up 800+ pounds (360+ kg) of bike laying on its side. Add to that a horde of zombies trying to pop your helmet to snack on your head and you have a real problem. Avoid them.

**Choppers** have no place in this new world. They look cool, but they steer poorly (-5% to piloting skill, -15% to stunts and maneuvering), make a lot of noise, and can't carry much equipment (90 lbs/40.5 kg). Best thing to do with a chopper is give it to that cocky new guy who is sure to get everyone killed. Let him ride out and attract all that attention, just sit back and play clean-up.

**Bobbers** are the cat's meow when it comes to converting your heavy iron horse. With no fenders to pack mud, trimmed down seats, ample gas tanks and nimble steering make for a great choice. First thing I suggest anyone does with their old Harley or Honda cruiser is "Bob it." Rip off anything that doesn't need to be attached, lighten that hulk up, lower the handlebars and you will have a bike you can work with.

### Harley Davidson XL1200R Sportster

Manufacturer: Harley Davidson Motorcycle.

Class: Street Cruiser.

Crew: One plus one passenger.

S.D.C. by Location:

Tires (2) – 20 each

Main Body – 250

Maximum Speed: 110 mph (176 km).

Miles per Gallon: 50 mph (80 km).

Fuel Tank: 4.5 gallons (17 liters).

Bonuses & Penalties: -5% with passenger, +5% on stability rolls due to weight.

Cargo: 300 lbs (135 kg) in addition to rider without penalty.

Cost: \$8000+ pre-apocalypse.

### Honda Goldwing

Manufacturer: Honda Motor Corporation.

Class: Touring.

Crew: One plus one passenger.

S.D.C. by Location:

Tires (2) – 25 each

Main Body – 350

Maximum Speed: 115 mph (184 km).

Mile per Gallon: 50 (80 km).

Fuel Tank: 6.6 gallons (25 liters).

Bonuses & Penalties: -25% to off road maneuvering, +5% to high speed maneuvering, +5% on stability rolls due to weight. Bike provides partial cover from attacks.

Cargo: 600 lbs (270 kg) in addition to the rider without penalty.

Cost: \$20,000+ pre-apocalypse.

### Honda CB750 Chopper

Manufacturer: Honda Motor Corporation/Custom.

Class: Chopper.

Crew: One.

S.D.C. by Location:

Tires (2) – 15

Main Body – 150

Maximum Speed: 90 mph (144 km).

Miles per Gallon: 35 mpg (56 km).

Fuel Tank: 3 gallons (11.3 liters).

Penalties: -20% to off road maneuvering, -10% to high speed maneuvering, and -10% with passenger.

Cargo: 100 lbs (45 kg) in addition to the rider without penalty.

Cost: \$6,000-\$10,000 pre-apocalypse.

### 1934 Indian 401 Bobber

Manufacturer: Indian Motorcycles.

Class: Bobber.

Crew: One.

S.D.C. by Location:

Tires (2) – 20

Main Body – 200

Maximum Speed: 110 mph (176 km).

Miles per Gallon: 40 (64 km).

Fuel Tank: 5 gallons (18.9 liters).

Bonuses: None.

Cargo: 200 lbs (90 kg) in addition to the rider without penalty.

Cost: \$20,000+ pre-apocalypse.

## Brick's Pick

### Enduros and Dual Sport Bikes

It is my opinion that the enduro is the "do anything, go anywhere, save your sorry butt from situations you shouldn't be in in the first place" bike. They literally are the Swiss army knife of the motorcycle world. That being said, they really aren't good at anything specifically either. Enduros have been the choice of the military for years. Big gas tanks, long suspension travel, room for two and some gear, plus add to that the bike is just as capable on road as off and you have a Reaper's dream bike. These bikes are designed to fall down hills, be thrown over logs and take downright abuse. Most of them have fuel systems that can be adjusted to run on just about anything from Kerosene to Everclear if you know what you are doing. Hell, the US Marine corps has a KLR 650 that runs on Diesel and gets over a hundred miles to the gallon.

All this flexibility comes at a price. They don't handle well hugging the corners at speed on pavement, they don't accelerate all that quick, and they are lightweight (under 500 lbs/225 kg) and are relatively easy to knock over. Great at nothing, but good at everything. Don't pass up one of these if given the chance.

#### KLR 650

Manufacturer: Kawasaki Motors Corporation.

Class: Enduro/Dual Sport Motorcycle.

Crew: One plus one passenger.

### S.D.C. by Location:

Tires (2) – 20

Main Body – 200

Maximum Speed: 85 mph (136 km).

Mile per Gallon: 45 mpg (72 km).

Fuel Tank: 6.1 gallons (23 liters).

Bonuses: +10% to off road maneuvering, -10% to high speed maneuvering and -5% with passenger.

Cargo: 200 lbs (90 kg) in addition to the rider without penalty.

Cost: \$6,000-\$7,000 pre-apocalypse.

### **DR 650**

Manufacturer: Suzuki Motorcycle Company.

Class: Enduro/Dual Sport Motorcycle.

Crew: One plus one passenger.

### S.D.C. by Location:

Tires (2) – 15 each

Main Body – 150

Maximum Speed: 80 mph (128 km).

Miles per Gallon: 55 mpg (88 km).

Fuel Tank: 3.1 gallons (11.7 liters).

Bonuses & Penalties: +10% to off road maneuvering, -10% to high speed maneuvering and -10% with a passenger.

Cargo: 150 lbs (67.5 kg) in addition to the rider without penalty.

Cost: \$5300 pre-apocalypse.

### **BMW F 650 GS**

Manufacturer: BMW Motorcycle Division.

Class: Enduro/Dual Sport Motorcycle.

Crew: One plus one passenger.

### S.D.C. by Location:

Tires (2) – 20 each

Main Body – 200

Maximum Speed: 100 mph (160 km).

Miles per Gallon: 50 mpg (80 km).

Fuel Tank: 4 gallons (15 liters).

Bonuses & Penalties: +5% to off road maneuvering, -5% to high speed maneuvering, and -5% with passenger.

Cargo: 150 lbs (67.5 kg) without penalty.

Cost: \$8100 pre-apocalypse.

## **Dirt Bikes**

Dirt bikes are just that. Bikes for riding in the dirt. They are comparatively small, quick, nimble bikes that you can cross terrain with that will make the driver of any other bikes and vehicles cower. But these agile little bikes sacrifice everything else to make this possible. They have small gas tanks, poor lighting, little or no room for passengers or equipment and are very loud. An additional problem that comes with dirt bikes is they are mostly two-stroke engines. This is great for power to weight ratios, but you have to mix oil into the gas. Don't think for a second you can go without it, or that high revving engine will seize up and leave you stranded. Repairing these bikes can also be counter-intuitive and often requires special training and tools.

### **KTM 450 EXC**

Manufacturer: KTM North America.

Class: Competition Off Road.

Crew: One plus one passenger.

### S.D.C. by Location:

Tires (2) – 10 each

Main Body – 90

Maximum Speed: 85 mph (136 km).

Miles per Gallon: 85 mpg (136 km).

Fuel Tank: 2.38 gallons (9 liters).

Bonuses & Penalties: +20% to off road maneuvering, -10% to high speed maneuvering, and -15% with passenger.

Cargo: 100 lbs (45 kg) in addition to rider without penalty.

Cost: \$7,500 pre-apocalypse.

### **Honda 250**

Manufacturer: Honda Motor Corporation.

Class: Competition Off Road.

Crew: One plus one passenger.

### S.D.C. by Location:

Tires (2) – 8 each

Main Body – 90

Maximum Speed: 60 mph (96 km)

Miles per Gallon: 40 mpg (64 km).

Fuel Tank: 2.1 gallons (7.9 liters).

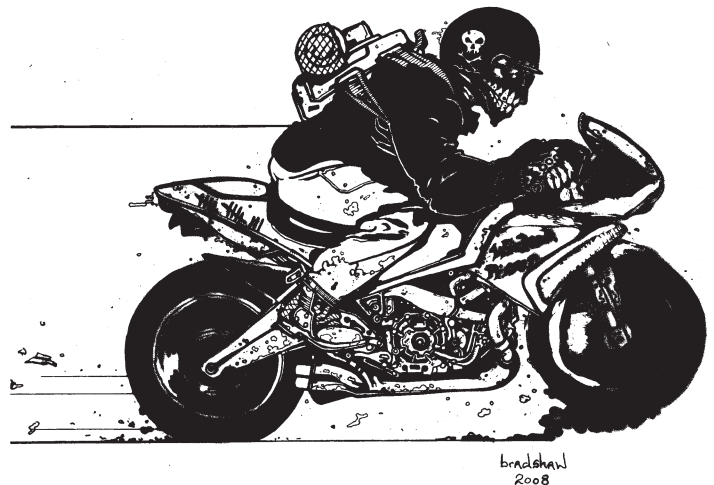
Bonuses & Penalties: +20% to off road maneuvering, -5% to high speed maneuvering and -15% with passenger.

Cargo: 140 lbs (63 kg) in addition to rider without penalty.

Cost: \$4,000 pre-apocalypse

## **Motorcycle Gear**

If you plan on living through your first ride, you better have some armor. You can wear your sneakers, blue jeans and that hoodie if you like, but I hope you like picking gravel out of your skin. When you drop your bike – and you will, brother, it happens – you need to be prepared for what is going to happen. Any cotton clothing will vaporize when it hits pavement, even denim. Clothing provides little more protection than wearing nothing at all.



**Ballistic nylon jackets** are great stuff, especially the stuff with hard armor in it. It keeps you cool in the heat, and protects you from road rash while the hard armor protects the joints and spine on a fall. Down side to this stuff is it only lasts one spill; a fall will tear it up, but save your hide. A.R. of Jacket: 9. S.D.C.: 25. Cost: \$150-\$300

**Leather Riding Suit.** The best all around solution is leather. No two ways about it, it will save your life over and over again. If you can find a leather jacket and pants with reinforced hard armor inserts then you should protect it with your life, cause it will keep you alive. Leather will protect you from a fall, and has the added benefit of being really hard for zombies to bite or claw through. Think about it. You ever try biting through leather? It is not gonna happen, so against zombies, leather armor, leather jackets, they are perfect; the best all around protection a Reaper can ask for. Be sure to grab a set of steel toed boots (\$50-\$150) and a pair of gloves (\$35-\$100) to round everything out. Black is always the fashionable choice.

Zombie Combat Note: Biting and clawing attacks from zombies do 10% their normal damage. Punches, kicks and knockdown do NO damage.

A.R. of Leather Riding Suit (Jacket & Pants): 12

S.D.C.: Soft: 25. Padded: 35. Studded: 45. Reinforced: 65 (plastic, metal or ceramic plates at the forearms, elbows, shoulders, and knees).

Cost: Soft and Padded: \$250-\$500. Studded: \$350-\$600. Reinforced: \$800-\$1,000. **Note:** Also see *Body Armor*.

**Motorcycle Helmet.** Always wear a helmet. Not only will it protect your head from the pavement, but it will keep the zombies out too. A good closed faced helmet is the best protection around. They are lightweight, strong and keep the gore out of your eyes when smashing a zombie's skull in. Even if you are not riding, I suggest you wear a helmet and keep it on, they should be considered a standard piece of survival gear. Trust me, a helmet has saved my skin more times than I can count. A.R. of Helmet: 14. S.D.C.: 50. Cost: \$150-\$300.

## Fuel/Gasoline

Gasoline will store for a remarkably long time if properly handled and prepared, but by and large, modern fuel sucks. Fuel companies creating "clean" burning fuels have added oxygenate additives that break down quickly. Adding a *fuel stabilizer* helps this process, but the best thing that can be done is to store the fuel in a cool, dry place in a sealed metal container. Avoid using plastic containers, even the ones that say they are certified for fuel. They are great for moving fuel, or short term storage, but not so good for the long term. In general, modern fuel stored in a plastic container will last a few months before it starts to break down. It may still work, at best it will misfire and gum up your injection and carburetors, and worst case you will have a tank full of inert fuel that you will have to dump. Save the old fuel for burning bodies. If gasoline is stored in a metal container in the proper environment it will keep for a 4D6+12 months or so. If fuel stabilizers are used that can be extended an extra 1D4 years. **Cost per Gallon:** Varies.

**Fuel/Diesel Fuel:** About the same as gasoline. Untreated diesel can be kept on a shelf for two years without any problem, af-

ter that it deteriorates quickly. Keep your diesel cool and dry and be sure to use diesel stabilizer every 6 months to keep it fresh. Stabilizers add 1D4 years to its life. **Cost:** Varies, \$5+ per gallon in the USA.

**Customized Extra Fuel Can.** Find a metal one liter water bottle, the kind you used to see in hiking and outdoor stores. Fill it with gas and zip tie it to your bike, under the frame or behind the seat, then forget about it. Running out of gas at the wrong time can cost you more than just sore feet. Having a liter of fuel in a handy little container like this not only gets you another twenty or so miles down the road, but it can start wet wood on fire, be a Molotov cocktail, or add a little detergent to have a flammable gel that will stick to anything it touches. **Cost per Gallon:** Varies.

**Fuel/Propane:** Many cooking grills, portable to full-sized, free-standing barbecue grills, cookers, as well as some hunting and industrial heaters use propane gas. Typically a 1-5 gallon canister. **Cost:** Varies \$5-\$10 per gallon of propane gas. \$20-\$30 for the canister.

## Other Vehicles

**Cars** are everywhere, but their use is limited on the debris and vehicle filled streets of most cities and towns. There are places where the roads are clean and clear, but turn a corner and the street is packed with abandoned vehicles or rubble. Automobiles also lack the protection and strength needed to survive a zombie attack, and do *not* have off road capabilities, but may be more useful in open rural areas. Pickup trucks, jeeps, SUVs and Humvees are more versatile with off-road capabilities and can handle gravel roads, open fields, and broken road.

### Automobiles – General Stats

**Compact:** A.R.: 7. S.D.C.: 300. **Speed:** 110 mph (176 km). **Range:** 350 miles (560 km). **Cost:** \$18,000+.

**Mid-Size Sedan:** A.R.: 8. S.D.C.: 360. **Speed:** 120 mph (192 km). **Range:** 300 miles (480 km). **Cost:** \$19,000+.

**Full-Size Sedan:** A.R.: 8. S.D.C.: 450. **Speed:** 120 mph (192 km). **Range:** 250 miles (400 km). **Cost:** \$24,000+.

**Luxury Sedan:** A.R.: 9. S.D.C.: 450. **Speed:** 120 mph. (192 km). **Range:** 250 miles (400 km). **Cost:** \$48,000+.

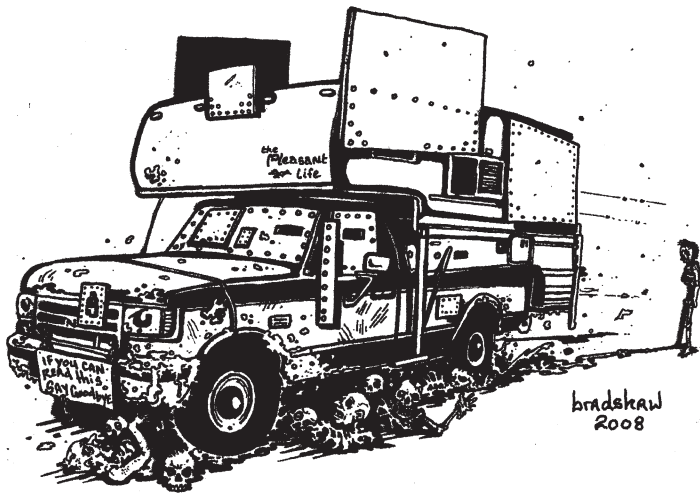
**Sports Car:** A.R.: 7. S.D.C.: 290. **Speed:** 120-180 mph (192-288 km). **Range:** 200 miles (320 km). **Cost:** \$38,000+.

**Mini-Van:** A.R.: 9. S.D.C.: 350. **Speed:** 120 mph (192 km). **Range:** 350 miles (560 km). **Cost:** \$22,000+.

**Full-Sized Van:** A.R.: 10. S.D.C.: 400. **Speed:** 120 mph (192 km). **Range:** 200 miles (320 km). **Cost:** \$20,000+.

**Jeep (4-Wheel Drive):** A.R.: 9. S.D.C.: 300. **Speed:** 120 mph (192 km). **Range:** 400 miles (640 km). **Cost:** \$26,000+.

**Sport Utility Vehicle (4-Wheel Drive):** A.R.: 10. S.D.C.: 310. **Speed:** 120 mph (192 km). **Range:** 200 miles (320 km). **Cost:** \$23,000+.



**Small Truck/Pickup:** A.R.: 8. S.D.C.: 300. Speed: 120 mph (192 km) Range: 300 miles (480 km). Cost: \$18,000+.

**16 foot Truck:** A.R.: 9. S.D.C.: 400. Speed: 120 mph (193 km) Range: 200 miles (320 km). Cost: \$29,000+.

**24-foot Truck:** A.R.: 10. S.D.C.: 500. Speed: 120 mph (193 km) Range: 190 miles (304 km). Cost: \$45,000+.

**Semi-Truck (Cab Only):** A.R.: 12. S.D.C.: 600. Speed: 120 mph (192 km). Range: 400 miles (640 km). Cost: \$90,000+. **Cargo Trailer:** \$90,000+.

## Aircraft

**Glider:** A.R.: 5. S.D.C.: 100. Speed: 100 mph (160 km). Range: Effectively unlimited, as long as there is a wind current to ride; typically 6-24 miles (9.6 to 38 km). Cost: \$5,000+.

**Autogyro/Ultralight:** A.R.: 6. S.D.C.: 150. Speed: 120 mph (192 km). Range: 200 miles (320 km). Cost: \$7,500+.

**Hot-Air Balloon:** A.R.: 5. S.D.C.: 100 (gondola), 50 (balloon canvas). Speed: As fast as the wind moves. Range: Up to 1,000 miles (1,600 km), depending on size of fuel tanks. Cost: \$20,000+.

**Helicopter, Commercial:** A.R.: 7. S.D.C.: 350. Speed: 300 mph (480 km). Range: 680 miles (1,088 km). Cost: \$320,000+.

**Helicopters, Military Combat:** A.R.: 10. S.D.C. by Location: Main Body: 430, Tail: 250, Rotor: 180. Length: 52-57 feet (15.8 to 17.3 m). Basic Weight: 2-4 tons. Payload: Varies; 1-2 tons. Cruising Speed: 125-150 mph (200 to 240 km). Range: 300-400 miles (480 to 640 km). **Optional Armaments:** Can accommodate up to two 2.75 inch Rocket Pods (1D6x10 damage per rocket to an 8 foot/2.4 m blast radius), two mini-guns (2D4x10 per ten round burst; 500 round payload), or two light, medium or heavy machine-guns, and one 40mm Mark-19 automatic grenade launcher (1D4x10 damage per grenade to a 6 foot/1.8 m blast radius). Cost: Millions.

**Single Engine Plane:** A.R.: 7. S.D.C.: 400. Speed: 300 mph (480 km). Range: 680 miles (1,088 km). Cost: \$170,000+ (needs an airfield).

**Double-Engine Plane:** A.R.: 8. S.D.C.: 550. Speed: 420 mph (672 km). Range: 600 miles (960 km). Cost: \$280,000+ (needs an airfield).

**Small Jet:** A.R.: 9 S.D.C.: 850 Speed: 600 mph (966 kph) Range: 1,370 miles (2,192 km). Cost: 450,000+ (needs an airfield).

**Large Passenger Airliner/Large Cargo Jet:** A.R.: 10 S.D.C.: 2,000. Speed: 500 mph (800 km). Range: 4,000 miles (6,400 km). Cost: Not generally available and needs a large commercial airfield.

## Armored Military Combat Vehicles

**LAV-25 Personnel Carrier:** A.R.: 14. Weight: 12.05 tons. Length: 21 feet (6.4 m). Crew: 3; 6-10 troops. Max. Speed: 62 mph (99.2 km). Max. Range: 410 miles (656 km). Stops anything under a .50 caliber machine-gun round. The underside is vulnerable to mines. S.D.C. by Location: Main Body: 600, Treads: 75 each. Typical Armament: 30mm Chain Gun, 7.62 Light Machine-Gun, Multi-Round Grenade Launcher (Smoke). Cost: \$900,000+. Notes: Any enemy fire that penetrates the A.R. has a 66% chance of inflicting full damage on everybody riding inside.

**M-48A3 Patton II Tank:** A.R.: 16. Stops pistol, rifle, light machine-guns and fragments. Vulnerable to mines, antitank rockets and heavy machine-guns. Weight: 52.4 tons. Length: 28 feet (8.5 m). Crew: 4. Max. Speed: 30 mph (48 km). Max. Range: 287 miles (459 km). S.D.C. By Location: Main Body: 1,000, Main Gun: 200, Treads (2): 200 each. Typical Armaments: 90mm gun: 1D4x100 damage. Payload: 50 rounds. Blast Radius: 20 feet (6.1 m). Range: 4,000 feet (1,219 m), plus a .50 caliber or .30 caliber machine-gun. Attacks per Melee: The main gun can fire four times per melee with one action needed to reload after each shot. Machine-gun as per gunner. Cost: Millions. Just go borrow one, if you can. Notes: The main U.S. battle tank of the Vietnam war. Obsolete by modern battlefield standards, highly organized survivalist units (particularly in Appalachia) have stockpiled many of these.

**M1A1 Main Battle Tank:** A.R.: 18. Stops pistol, rifle, light and medium machine-gun fire and shrapnel. Vulnerable to mines, antitank rockets and heavy machine-guns. S.D.C. by Location: Main Body: 1,500. Main Gun: 300. Treads (2): 300 each. Weight: 67.7 tons. Length: 32 feet (9.7 m). Crew: 4. Max. Speed: 30 mph (48 km) on rough terrain, 42 mph (67.2 km) on pavement. Max. Range: 289 miles (462.4 km). Typical Armament: 120mm gun: 2D4x100 per blast. Payload: 50 rounds. Blast Radius: 20 feet (6.1 m). Range: 4,000 feet (1,219 m), plus .50 caliber machine-gun, .30 caliber machine-gun. Attacks per Melee: The main gun can fire four times per melee with one action needed to reload after each shot, other weapons as per gunner. Cost: Yeah, right! Would you sell one of these babies? Didn't think so. Notes: This tank was state of the art armor for what used to be the U.S. Marine Corps and U.S. Army.

# Adventure Ideas

## 101 Random Scenarios, Encounters and Settings

By Kevin Siembieda, Josh Hilden & Joshua Sanford

Need a quick idea for an adventure or random encounter? This table should help you out. The encounters are designed to cover a lot of different settings, though we tried to make it so you could drop them into any environment, city/urban, rural and on the road. With a little imaginative tweaking, a good Game Master (G.M.) should be able to modify any encounter or adventure idea from rural to urban, or city to rural. Make a random roll and run with the ideas, or pick one and build upon it as your own adventure. G.M.s, make whatever changes and additions you deem necessary for your group of players and personal taste. Let those imaginations run loose and have fun.

**01% A beautiful, small community in a lush valley.** The community appears to be free of zombie infestation and raider activity. Everything appears to be quiet, pleasant and peaceful. The people are friendly and welcoming. They even offer weary travelers a free (or cheap) hot meal and a place to spend the night. It is all wonderful. Or is it too good to be true?

The community keeps the zombies away by actively hunting them in a 20 mile (32 km) radius. In order to supply themselves they lure unsuspecting travelers into their community. During the first evening that visitors (our player characters?) spend the night, a group of villagers attempt to attack, rob and murder them in their sleep! There will be one villager for every player character. Fearing retribution if word about their evil deeds gets out, the men assigned to the brutal task fight to the death. Furthermore, should things go badly, 2D4+2 other villagers will join the effort to slay the visitors. If the visitors escape and make a run for it, the bushwhackers give pursuit and fight to the death. If the visitors should manage to kill all of their attackers, the rest of the villagers will surrender, apologize, return any items that were stolen and provide the group with other basic supplies. They insist the slain men were the only ones who engaged in this treachery, but can the rest of these people really be trusted? Presumably, these men were fathers, husbands, and siblings to other people in this community. People who may seek retribution for their murder, regardless of the foul circumstances.

**02% Retro-Savages dropping off dinner.** Our heroes see a group of men doing something along the edge of a road at an abandoned store, gas station, park, farm or city outskirts. (There is nothing of value in the buildings as they have been looted long ago.)

If the player group watches for a minute or so, they realize the men with guns are tying up 1D4+1 people to a lamppost, telephone pole, fence post, or other secure object. Women folk seem to be praying or chanting. When their captives are tied up, the entire group (1D4+2 women and 1D4+4 men) sing a short, but loud, song like you'd hear in church, and quickly leave. The people left behind are sobbing, pleading for their lives or shouting not to be left there "to die." If the player characters continue to watch or start moving forward to investigate, they'll see 1D4+2 Slouchers shuffling up from a short way down the road,

the woods or from a nearby building. 1D6 more appear one minute later. All are shuffling over toward the people tied up and will be on them in 1D4+2 minutes. Do our heroes run to their rescue?

What happens next? Did the Retro-Savages who left these people to be killed by zombies linger to watch from a distance? Are they angry that their victims are rescued? Do they attack (probably not) or do they get more men and track our heroes and/or the rescued captives down late that night? (Possibly.) Or perhaps more zombies start to appear, many more than expected. Do our heroes and the people they are trying to rescue make a run for it? Where? Do they try to hide in the building or make a pitched fight? Is there something more sinister going on here?

**03% Retro-Savage Community.** All the signs are there. Large religious symbols, warning signs to keep out, quotes from scripture painted on rooftops. This is a Retro-Savage community. It may be located in a rural region, or somewhere between a few cities. Most survivors who use vehicles and technology know it is best to avoid such places. As our heroes are probably preparing to give the place a wide berth, they are approached by an elderly man, a young woman and 14 year old boy who look frantic and plead for our heroes' help.

Their story is a sad and frightening one. Someone has kidnaped their two little girls, Mary, 10, and Anna, 7, as well as one of the neighbor's girls, their playmate, little Bethany, 6. Evidence left behind pointed to a mercenary group that recently had a run in with the community, and the men folk have gone to confront the mercs to demand they turn the girls over to them or else.

However, *Johnny* (the young boy at their side) was out fishing at Waller's creek where he saw some suspicious strangers and snuck closer to see what they were up to. Here is the horror story that is about to unfold, as best as Johnny knows it. He saw a Death Priest and overheard him talking to some of his men and a Thinker zombie.

These villains have targeted the farm community because the cultists are under the misconception that the Retro farmers are a *Safe Haven Community* being used by a pack of Reapers and Survivors who have been giving them grief back in the city. In an act of retribution, they mean to wipe out the village and make it look like zombies are responsible.

To ensure success, they kidnaped the three girls and made it look like the mercenaries did it. The cultists knew the men would jump to the wrong conclusion and confront the mercenaries. With any luck, a firefight will ensue and the men will be gunned down, taking some of the mercenaries with them.

Meanwhile, the cultists have trucked in what Johnny estimates to be at least 40 zombies, probably more, to raid the Retro-Savages' community. With the men gone, the women and children are sitting ducks. Even if they could flee, where would they go? According to Johnny, who saw the zombies unloading from the trucks, the walking dead are on their way and are only 8-14 minutes away (roll 2D4+6)

Johnny saw six Fast Attack Zombies, a Thinker and what he estimated to be 30+ Slouchers, but he didn't wait around long to see them all, so there could be more Fast Attackers or other zombies on their way.



There are 27 women, 5 elderly men, and 32 children in town, plus the three begging for help: Johnny, who is ready to fight, Laura-Beth and Grandpa Joseph, 78 years old but ready to fight. Four other men are out in the fields *somewhere*. None of the others in the community know about the impending crisis, yet.

The trio plead for our heroes to help, but they have nothing to offer them as a reward except food supplies and God's love. They understand if the group turns tail and runs, but they pray they'll stay and help. "Please, in the name of God, help us."

The church is the best place to make a stand, the heavy oaken doors can be secured, and the windows have shutters that can be latched. The bell tower also offers a vantage point where three men with rifles could see the entire community and pick off zombies from a distance. 14 houses and small farms are scattered around the church, and there is one main road. The zombies will be coming from the east.

Grandpa Joseph wants to take a horse and try to stop the conflict between the men folk and the mercenaries and bring them back, only they are 30 minutes away by horse (one way), 12 minutes by motorcycle or car; too bad the community does not have such vehicles. Grandpa hopes he can get the mercenaries to come back with the men to help too. His thought is our heroes only need to keep people safe for 45-60 minutes before help arrives. Provided they all act quickly.

What happens next is left up to the player characters. As bad as this situation is, they have probably faced worse. Can they turn their backs on women, children and families in need?

**Note:** If the player characters stay to help, some of the women are able to fight and 1D4 of the men in the field will show up to join the battle. (Unless the zombies get them first!) Should they win the battle, or survive long enough for the cavalry to arrive and save even half the people, these Retro-Savages will be eternally grateful. Not only that, but the heroes will always be welcomed here, and the inhabitants will pray for them, despite their contrary beliefs.

**Complications:** 1. There are 2D6+8 more zombies than Johnny knows about (more if the G.M. deems it necessary or desirable).

2. It takes 2D4x10 minutes *longer* for help to arrive than anticipated (or as the G.M. decides. Certainly, help should arrive before our heroes and the community are overwhelmed).

3. With everything going on, don't forget the three girls are still in the clutches of the Death Priest. He and his captives may still be in the area or may have gone back to the cult's lair back in the city! (Or whatever the G.M. desires.) Is there a rescue operation to be planned? This could be a whole other adventure. The player characters are certainly much more capable of rescuing the girls than most of the farmers, though some may want to come along (NPCs).

**04% A tiny community with something amazing!** This could be a two stop-light town, a zombie-light zone in a suburb, town or city, a tall building community in the city, or an isolated compound in the city or on its outskirts. The community has a moderate zombie infestation in or all around it, but the survivors have managed to deal with the walking dead so far.

The real draw and importance of this community is they have electricity and clean running water! Heck, maybe their community is at the electric plant or water purification plant and they

have the personnel to keep it running! This gives them great potential for growth and becoming a Safe Haven Community. Of course, it also makes them a target to bandits, raiders, and Terror or Death Cultists and other bad guys who might want this precious and rare resource for themselves. Not to mention the problem with the zombies in the area.

**G.M. Note:** Game Masters, noodle around what exactly the problem is here. Maybe the community needs supplies. Maybe it needs protection from a rival force/gang/cult who wants to take over. Maybe they just need help clearing out the zombies and building better defenses, or maybe they need the player group to help hook them up with a band of Apocalyptic Soldiers (or our heroes) to give them the protection they need to grow. This could give the player characters an important role in becoming major and influential leaders at a Safe Haven Community they helped establish. Being part of such a community is also a great source for adventures and missions.

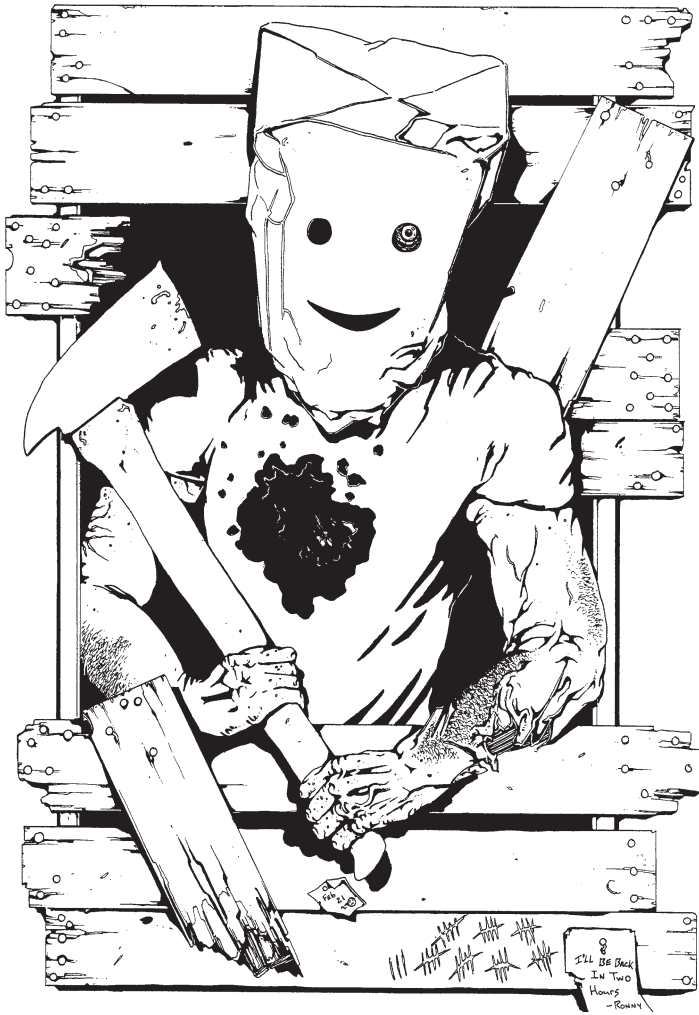
**05% A small survivor community living among smoking ruins.** There are less than a dozen survivors, and they are all in a state of shock. There are no zombies in the area and there are quite a few supplies to be salvaged from the ruins (*see the salvage tables*). If the survivors are questioned the player characters will learn that some sort of calamity destroyed the town. Unknown to the player group one of the survivors is the person who caused the disaster, and it has driven him mad.

**06% Our heroes run into a band of Soldiers or Reapers about to engage in a zombie killfest.** These are good guys happy to share with our heroes what information they know about the area (which is probably very limited) and they invite the heroes to join them on their Death Run. "Can always use men who know how to handle themselves in a battle against walking dead." If the group "joins in the fun," they are part of the zombie extermination mission. How well that mission goes and what happens next is up to the G.M. It might go smoothly and fun and lead to other adventures, or it might go wrong. These warriors seem confident, skilled and well equipped but they may get in over their heads, have bad intelligence that works against them, get split up and have to find a new way out of the community, find survivors whose presence complicates things, a squad or leader might get captured by a Terror Cult, crazy Mock Zombie, or lunatic, and the extermination mission turns into a rescue mission, etc.

**07% Survivor Caravan.** These 4D6+12 people on foot, mostly women and children, are seeking rescue. They don't know where to go or what to do next. They hope to find a Safe Haven Community and understand there is one somewhere in the area. Their people are exhausted and food, water, ammunition and supplies are running thin. They hope the characters know where the community is and will escort them to it (good characters would do so). Failing that, they hope they help them find the haven, and/or nightfall is rapidly approaching, and they need to rest. To zombies, all these people are going to glow like a restaurant neon dinner sign unless they take cover someplace. There should be something nearby. Will our heroes help them find shelter, quietly clear it out of 1D4 zombies, secure it and stay the night to help protect them?

**08% A vehicle is stalled in the middle of the road.** Two fresh zombies, a mother and a child, are trapped in the vehicle and can't seem to figure out how to get out. It would be very

easy to go around the car and keep on going. However, the zombies might get out and hurt someone. Take them down now and our heroes may be saving lives. Besides, what trade goods might the vehicle contain? One never knows if slaying zombies is going to be easy or difficult. If they shoot through the tightly closed windows, the glass shatters and the zombies will crawl out, start moaning and attack. Picking the door lock may be an option to use other, silent weapons to avoid attracting more zombies who might be in the area. **Note:** The little girl is a Fast Attack Zombie, the mother is a Sloucher. In the back seat was fresh produce but 90% of it has been trashed by the zombies as they were trying to get out. In the trunk are two spare tires, two cases of 32 bottles of water, a gallon thermos of grape juice, four blankets, some extra clothes, a box of 24 honey granola bars, and a sheet of paper with GPS coordinates and a note written on it that reads: *Denver, Colorado, SAFE ZONE.*



**09% Small town under siege.** 1D6x10+68 survivors are trying to clear out a small town of zombies and reclaim it as their own. They aren't faring as well as they had hoped. They have lost 2D6+10 of their people and supplies are running low, including fresh drinking water, food, and ammunition. They've fought so hard and sacrificed so much already, that they don't want to give up now and move on. They've made excellent headway, but have a ways yet to go. They are happy to accept a helping hand from any zombie hunters who might come their way. They offer such valiant volunteers a fair percentage

of booty (supplies and such) that may be recovered in parts of town where the zombies are yet to be cleared out, as well as a place in their community if they want to stay. These good folks hope to establish a Safe Haven Community in this town.

This means the player characters could be sent on search and rescue missions, zombie seek and destroy operations, scouting, recovery of supplies and ammo in town, and defending against zombie raids on their camp.

In the alternative, while this town is a good fit as a potential Safe Haven Community, it does not seem to have a lot of available resources (water, food, ammo, etc.). That means the survivors need someone, like the player characters, to make salvage runs into a larger, neighboring town or small city 1D4x10 miles (16 to 64 km) away to get the supplies (water, food, ammo, more guns, etc.) they so desperately need. Of course, this place is devoid of human life and filled with an unknown quantity of zombies.

**10% A group of survivors are camped over the next hill.** As the player group nears their camp, the moans of the walking dead can be heard from the south and west.

Do they team up with the other survivors or do they run for it? The camped survivors are moving exclusively on foot and there are 1D6+3 children among them. If the player characters decide to fight they will be facing 2D4x10+18 Slouchers and a half dozen Crawlers. They will not be alone in the fight, 26 of the camp survivors are experienced fighters armed with a combination of small arms and hand to hand weapons. If the battle is won, and it shouldn't be too hard of a fight if everyone watches each other's back and employ simple tactics, it will be revealed that there is a Medical Doctor and a nurse in the camp who have a truck (the only vehicle in their group) full of medicine and medical supplies. In fact, the group hopes to find and settle in at a Safe Haven Community if only they could find one.

**11% A group of survivors are camped over the next hill.** As the player characters near the camp the moans of the undead can be heard from the south. Before the player characters can decide if they want to run or fight, two Fast Attack Zombies come sprinting up the road heading toward the survivors' camp; the Runners don't see our heroes. Looking in the direction from which they came, the player characters see a horde of zombies coming (1D6x10+40 Slouchers led by a Thinker.) The survivors camped ahead have no idea the zombies are coming for them. If the characters act now, the group will have a chance to pull up stakes and try to run, or prepare to make a stand. It will probably be the latter as the 2D6+16 survivors have only two motorcycles and a pickup truck, the rest are on foot. Thankfully, these people are experienced fighters armed with a combination of handguns, rifles, shotguns and melee weapons. If the battle is won and our heroes had joined in their defense, the survivors will share information about the area (if they have any), food, water, and spare supplies with their new found friends. They also have a Medical Doctor and ample medical supplies to tend to the wounded. What these people have seen or know could lead to more adventure or help the player group.

**12% An overturned box truck lays on its side a little ways off the side of the road.** 2D6+6 Slouchers, 1D6 Crawlers and 1D4 Fast Attack Zombies have it encircled. Several are pounding on the vehicle while three pull at the large, back door of the



truck in a futile attempt to open it. They must sense life inside if they are trying so hard to get in.

If our heroes take out the zombie horde, what they find inside we leave to the Game Master. It could be a truck filled with survivors (3D6+8 people), a Shepherd of the Damned and 2D6+10 people, soldiers (4D6 of them), bandits (4D6 of them; how happy and grateful are they to be rescued?), one lone family (1D4+3 people), or perhaps livestock (pigs, goats, chickens,

etc.); some are probably hurt and in need of help. If people, were they escaping from someplace? Heading someplace? Is this just the beginning of an adventure? Or the truck might be filled with livestock that bolts out the door the second it is opened.

**13% An overturned box truck is in the middle of the road.** If the player characters approach the vehicle, they notice that it appears to be loaded with canned goods; some are spilled on the road and the back door is slightly opened. This treasure trove should be too tempting for any survivors to pass by. The truck contains 288 cans of corn beef hash, 144 cans of pork 'n beans, 96 cans of green beans, 288 cans of chicken noodle soup, 576 bottles of water and 144 cans of beer.

As the player group approaches the vehicle, they can hear the tearing and ripping sound of flesh being torn from bone. 1D4+3 Flesh-Eating Zombies are gorging themselves on the corpses of the driver and passenger killed in the crash. The zombies are aggressive and protective of their meal, and if they are equal to the number of people in the group (or more), the Flesh Eaters attack. The zombies fight until half of them have been taken down, before the rest flee into the shadows off the road.

However, loud combat or gunfire will attract 1D6+4 Slouchers within 1D4 minutes. If combat continues, another 2D6+4 Slouchers show up and join the battle three minutes later. If these zombies can be dealt with, no more show up for 2D4x10 minutes, and even then it's only 1D6 wandering Slouchers. However, 10 minutes after the battle with zombies, a pack of 1D4x10+20 wild dogs attracted by the scent of blood appear on the scene. They will challenge our heroes and attack (they want what's left of the driver and passenger and possibly some zombie meat), but flee after 1D6+5 of them are killed or if the pack leader is killed. **Note:** Any zombies not dealt with properly will rise and attack again 60 minutes after they died.

**14% Several overturned and burned out vehicles 100 yards off the road.** Something happened here. Bandits? Raiders? Tragic accident? Does the player group stop to search for salvage or survivors? What do they find? Are zombies coming? If not, why? Something is going on here. Are there clues or a trail of footprints or blood?

**15% An overturned pickup truck is off to the side of the road.** There is blood on the driver's side of the door, but no driver or passenger. The load has spilled. There is a generator, six five gallon canisters of gasoline, a case of whiskey and what looks to be several dozen cans of food.

It is a trap! There are a group of raiders or bandits hiding in the tree line waiting to jump anyone who approaches the truck. There are two bad guys for every character in the player group. The bandits don't necessarily want to kill anybody, they just want to take whatever they can use from their "visitors" and send them on their way, without weapons, ammo or their vehicles. If combat ensues, they fight until half are killed or seriously wounded or until their leader is slain. If the brigands are run off, our heroes can recover anything taken from them as well as a handful of weapons, a motorcycle and some extra ammo. G.M. to determine exactly what (little or a lot), not to mention the stuff from the truck that was part of the trap. However, stopping to gather it all up leaves them vulnerable to attack if the villains regroup and return. **Note:** Should our heroes ever

run into these bushwhackers again, the bandits will remember them and may seek retribution.

**16% A crashed box truck is off to the side of the road.** The vehicle is wrecked, there is blood on the driver's side of the door, but no driver or passenger. The back door of the truck is open and screaming, moaning and pounding can be heard from inside.

Three Slouchers are clawing at 1D4+2 women who are locked inside a metal cage that fills half of the truck's interior. The zombies can't get to them through the bars, but the women are terrified. Thankfully the zombies' moan is muffled by being inside the truck so there are no zombies approaching (yet). After the player characters deal with the zombies, they have the task of breaking the women free; the cage is chained shut with a heavy-duty lock. The women were kidnapped by raiders. In fact, moments after the women are freed, two pickup trucks, with five armed men inside each, and a motorcycle rider drive up toward them. These miscreants are the raiders who engage in the slave trade and they want their "merchandise back." They'll thank our heroes for rescuing their "merchandise" and promise if they give them the women, they are free to go. G.M.s should adjust the raiders' strength to make them a challenge for the players, but not overwhelming. All are first or second level punks.

**17% A crashed box truck is off to the side of the road.** The vehicle is wrecked, there is blood on the driver's side of the door, but no driver or passenger. The back door of the truck is closed, but not locked. A pack of 2D6+9 wild dogs are growling and sniffing around the back of the truck. They flee when our heroes hurt at least five of them.

Opening the back door reveals an empty cargo area except for a large dog (Golden Retriever, German Shepherd, etc.) who is happy to see people. The dog is friendly and well behaved. Roll percentile to determine the dog's training: 01-25% Pet/Companion, 26-50% Watchdog, 51-75% Trained guard/attack dog, 76-00% Trained zombie hunting dog. Painted in the back of the truck are the words: "Heading to Chicago Safe Haven." But as far as you know, Chicago is crawling with zombies and there is no Safe Haven Community there.

**18% A crashed box truck is off to the side of the road.** The vehicle is wrecked, there is blood on the driver's side of the door, but no driver or passenger. The back door of the truck is closed and locked. Opening it up reveals many large boxes, some overturned from the crash. They are full of clean, but secondhand clothes, probably part of some community or supplies intended for a rescue program. The three Slouchers and one Crawler that had gone dormant behind the boxes awaken and attack.

**19% A crashed truck (or other vehicle) is off to the side of the road.** The vehicle is wrecked, there is no blood, but there are claw marks and plenty of dents on the side. A pair of Slouchers are pinned between the front of the vehicle and a wall, tree or other obstruction. A pair of legs can be seen sticking out from one of the rear tires. Bending down to see the rest of the body reveals the upper torso is missing, and that's when the Crawler slashes out. Meanwhile, the two pinned zombies start to moan and 2D4 other Slouchers will appear within 1D4 minutes unless the two are silenced quickly. The Crawler does-

n't moan. Whether there are any items to be salvaged from the vehicle, is left to the G.M.

**20% A van or box truck has run off the road and into a body of water (pond, lake, river, etc.) about 7-8 feet (2.1 to 2.4 m) deep.** Three people stand on the roof of the vehicle. 2D6 Slouchers line the shore groaning and hissing in frustration and confusion. Since the moaning has stopped, these three survivors must have been out there for at least 1-2 days. These are the zombies that won't give up and go away. Taking out the zombies on the shoreline isn't the only problem. When our heroes get a closer look, they'll see 1D4+4 sets of hands trying to claw/climb up the side of the vehicle – zombies in the water. There are 1D6 more that can't be seen also underwater. At least they can't moan when underwater.

**21% City on fire.** A small city is on fire. Whatever happened here happened hours ago and the aftermath of that event is still going on. The biggest problem is the wave of zombies fleeing the inferno, and they are heading your way. Initially, 2D6 Fast Attack Zombies come running down the road. The nature of zombies being what it is, they, of course, attack any humans they encounter. They are followed by 2D6 Slouchers consumed in flames but still marching on! 6D6 Slouchers appear 1D4 minutes later. They are followed by 2D4x10 Slouchers 1D6 minutes after that. 1D6+2 minutes after that, an additional 3D6x10 zombies arrive on the scene. These are only the first wave, 2D6x100 will arrive 2D6+6 minutes after them. These kinds of numbers of zombies are spilling into the countryside all around the burning city. Going back the way the player characters came is probably their best bet, but the zombies will keep coming. This also means that over the next 2-8 hours, homesteads, farms, villages and Safe Haven Communities within a 60 mile (96 km) radius are about to get swarmed by 2D6x100 zombies. If our heroes know about any such places it would be nice to warn them, or help them evacuate or fight the Creeping Doom heading their way.

**22% A baby is crying inside an abandoned building.** No zombies appear to be on the scene yet. This could be a barn, a farmhouse, home, church, office building, etc. depending on the environment. If your heroes investigate, and they should if they have good alignments, it takes awhile to pinpoint the source of the crying. Turns out to be a kitten caterwauling about god only knows what. Meanwhile, the noise has attracted 3D6+6 zombies (all one type or a mixed group) who have surrounded the building and are starting to make their way in by smaller groups of 1D4.

**23% A baby is crying inside an abandoned building.** No zombies appear to be on the scene yet. This could be a barn, a farmhouse, home, church, office building, etc. depending on the environment. If your heroes investigate, and they should if they have good alignments, it takes awhile to pinpoint the source of the crying. First, they find the mother, a young girl under the age of 24. She is partially eaten. So is her boyfriend/husband laying a few feet away. Suddenly, he rises, looks at the nearest player character, hisses and rises to attack. He is a newly risen zombie and fights to the death. The young woman will rise as a walking dead in 1D4 minutes unless she is dealt prior to that. Meanwhile, the sound of the baby crying has moved to a couple of rooms away. When the zombie(s) is dealt with, and the location of the baby is found, our heroes face a pair of Flesh-Eating

Zombies who are toying with the baby before they kill and eat it. The zombies are not happy to have visitors. What happens next is up to the players.

**24% A baby is crying inside an abandoned building.** No zombies appear to be on the scene yet. This could be a barn, a farmhouse, home, church, office building, etc. depending on the environment. If your heroes investigate, and they should if they have good alignments, it takes awhile to pinpoint the source of the crying. When they track the sound to its source they find a teenage girl who has recently given birth. She is unconscious from exhaustion and loss of blood. Her newborn is laying clutched in her arms. A Flesh-Eating Zombie, already on the scene, screeches and flees. Meanwhile, 2D4 Slouchers have arrived, attracted by the sound of crying and scent of blood. 2D6 more will arrive in another five minutes, and 2D6+10 more five minutes after that. Grabbing the girl, the baby and getting out is a smart idea, only the baby won't stop crying and the girl remains unconscious and needs to be carried. Zombies will follow the sound and scent, and 1D4 other zombies will pop out of hiding along the way every 2D4 minutes wherever our heroes go, alerted by the sound and blood scent. Stop for more than a minute or two and triple the number of zombies that appear. Hope there is a vehicle nearby or this situation could get ugly.

**25% Bandits.** Roll up bandits the same as ordinary people or pick *Criminal Occupations*, though not all bandits were criminals before the Wave. These misanthropes are bad guys who bushwhack, rob and kill adventurers, heroes, travelers and survivors for their belongings, trade goods, weapons and vehicles. Our heroes encounter a group of these brigands (two for every one player character) who try to rob them at gunpoint. If battle ensues, the bandits fight until 25% of the gang members are seriously hurt or slain, before retreating.

Below is the chance of zombies showing up in response to the sound of battle. The walking dead attack the bandits first, giving our heroes a chance to flee. Do they take it, or do they try to help the bandits from getting slaughtered?

Remote Rural Area Far from an Urban Area: 01-25% chance of 2D4+1 zombies appearing.

Rural/Farm Area Not Far from an Urban Area: 01-38% chance of 2D6+3 zombies arriving.

Urban Neighborhood Area: 01-66% chance of 3D6+5 zombies arriving.

Urban City/Downtown Area: 01-88% chance of 5D6+11 zombies arriving.

**26% Raiders.** Roll up the same as ordinary people or pick *Criminal Occupations*. These bold, self-serving bad guys raid farms, attack rural villages, towns, Safe Haven Communities, and even cults, soldier camps and Reaper packs! They many also bushwhack, rob or kill adventurers, heroes, travelers and survivors on the road.

Possibility Number One: Our heroes have something they want. If combat ensues, zombies may show up, same as #25% above.

Possibility Number Two: Our heroes see a group of people, a survivor caravan, survivor community or Safe Haven Community (any of them might actually be cultists, but who can tell until the fighting stops), under attack by raiders. Do the player characters try to drive the raiders away, protect those they can,

stay back and watch, or go around the scene without helping? **Note:** Capture or take down the Raiders' leader and the rest of the gang is likely (95%) to disperse, at least for now. The raiders may come back for retribution or rescue.

Possibility Number Three: A band of raiders being converged upon by zombies. True, they are scum bags, but do you leave them to die? (Yes, is a valid question even to Principled characters.) There is a weak spot where the zombies are thin, but the raiders are too busy fighting for their lives to see it. If the player characters attacked from behind they could open a path the raiders could fight their way out of and make a gauntlet run. 1D4x10+60 zombies are part of the convergence and more will join them if they don't make a run for it now. This is the raiders' last chance. Does the player group help?

**27% The player characters are traveling along the bank of a moderately sized river.** They notice a good-sized motor or sailboat run aground on a small island in the middle of the river. If they could free the boat they could use it for safe transportation.

Getting to the abandoned boat is the first challenge. Getting there they can see the boat was obviously the home of one or more families with children, toys and such are all over the boat. There is dried blood all over the boat. 1D4 members of the family are inside, but they are all zombies! 4D6+3 other zombies inhabit the island. The boat still has enough provisions and fresh water to supply 12 people for two weeks. There is also a flare gun, a harpoon gun, and 30 feet (9.1 m) of rope.

**28% The player characters are traveling along the bank of a moderately sized river.** They notice an abandoned dock area, 2D6 storage shacks, a tiny bait and tackle shop, and a small general store. A rowboat and a medium-sized sailboat are at the dock. There is one lone figure sitting at the end of the dock fishing. He does not respond to any attempts to call out to him. (He is an elder man who is a Pattern Zombie. Does not attack unless threatened or attacked first.) There are 1D6+1 Slouchers in the dock area and 1D4 below the deck of the sailboat.

**29% There is a large passenger jet crashed in the field off the highway.** It appears that the pilot tried to bring the craft down in the field and was only partially successful. The front third of the airplane is crushed into the field and there are a series of cracks and tears along the length of the fuselage. There are half a dozen Slouchers inside the body of the aircraft, but nobody has, as of yet, attempted to salvage the contents of the vehicle. Is this an endeavor the player group might want to tackle? G.M., it is your call as to what they might find among the luggage in addition to lots of clothing, books and magazines. This could be a treasure trove or a bust. We also leave to you when and how many other zombies might show up over the 1D4+2 hours it will take to sort through everything (and that's going fast and reckless).

**30% There is a large passenger jet crashed in the field off the highway.** It appears that the pilot tried to bring the craft down in the field and was only partially successful. The front third of the airplane is crushed into the field and there are a series of cracks and tears along the length of the fuselage. The airplane has been heavily fortified by the survivors. Although the fuselage appears to be cracked open, closer inspection reveals that the cracks have been expertly repaired and reinforced. 36

people call the aircraft home. They have enough provisions to last another month, but will it be enough? There is a ring of approximately 200 zombies that have surrounded the vessel and make periodic sieges against the makeshift fortress. 2D6x10 more zombies join the horde every 24 hours! Our heroes learn all this from the three people who managed to escape with the purpose of finding help. Can our heroes help?

**31% The screams of a young girl** echo from an abandoned building (barn, farmhouse, home, store, office building, or whatever is appropriate). She has at least 80 zombies pressing toward her. She is up on something high (a ladder, stairs, safe, refrigerator, entertainment center) and not far from a window. The zombies have already killed her six companions. They'll have her in 1D4 minutes. Can the player characters save her? Through the window perhaps? If not, can they put her out of her misery before she is killed and becomes one of them? The zombies are so intent on her they don't notice anyone coming up from behind or from the side or outside the window.

**32% A lone, dazed individual stumbling down the road.** If they stop the man and question him he will regale them with the story of his community. They survived the initial outbreak and had been thriving. Two nights ago, a horde of walking dead were spotted heading toward town. They were unafraid, they had faced down the zombies a hundred times before. This time was different, they were led by a woman who could control the actions of the zombies. With her guidance, they were able to penetrate the tiny community's defenses. As far as he knows, everyone was killed. He barely escaped with his life. He begs the player characters to take him with them. Unbeknownst to the man, the Death Priest or Mock Zombie of the Terror Cult that destroyed his home let him escape for sport and is now hunting him. Trouble for the player group is coming.

**33% A lone, dazed individual stumbling down the road.** He is half out of his mind. He talks about a place of horror. A place where zombies are chained and used like attack dogs, and humans are raped, tortured and eaten by both humans and zombies alike. His stories are terrifying. He can't remember how he escaped. He sobs about how there are people, men, women and children, still at this den of torture. He can take the heroes there, but he won't go inside and he doesn't know what kind of forces they face. This shop of horrors is, of course, a decadent Terror Cult. It has only 17 cultists and a power crazed leader. Kill the leader, and the rest of the cultists fight but only enough to escape. All are first level Ordinary People. Of course, there are also zombies that may be let loose, and the leader himself may be cunning, tricky, dangerous, or inhuman.

**34% A lone, dazed individual stumbling down the road.** He is happy to see them and begs for their help or has valuable info to offer.

**35% The player characters encounter a lone, dazed individual stumbling down the road.** He is half out of his mind, seems angry and talking gibberish. "I had to do it. We could be saved. It was too much. We moved three times in the last four months. Every time they find us. It's better this way. Merciful." Pressing him some more or treating him with kindness, he starts to cry and says. "I only pray the Almighty understands and has mercy on my soul. Fifty-nine people locked in a burning church. It's better this way, isn't it? It's better than letting the zombies

get them, right? I . . . we couldn't go through another fight. I had to do it. I had to."

As if on cue, the wind carries the scent of burning wood to the player group. Not far away, perhaps a half mile beyond the trees, smoke billows into the sky. "I'm sorry," the man screams. "You'll all be in a better place soon." Then he looks up at one of the players and says, "I'm a coward. Too afraid to burn with my flock. You should kill me. I'm responsible for 59 people burning to death at this very moment."

All this just happened! The people are still alive. If the player group rushes to the location of the fire, they find that most of the alleged "zombie horde" the man spoke about have scattered to get away from the fire. There are only 1D8+8 around the church, a hundred yards/meters away from the actual building, and with huge amounts of space between them. The back of the church isn't on fire much, but the back doors are chained and locked. If someone could get down there and open the doors the people may still have a chance. The zombie gauntlet is thin, 1D4 zombies every 1000 feet (305 m). They may start to converge once people start to emerge from the back, but the fire will keep away most and that leaves 1D8+8 to deal with for the first 10 minutes.

**36% The player characters encounter a lone dazed individual stumbling down the road.** He looks surprised and frightened to see people and will try to run, only he's not moving very well. If stopped and questioned, the sickly looking fella says he's just trying to find his way to a Safe Haven Community he heard is someplace in the region. He has stories of losing his family, fighting zombies and wandering the land. He's happy to go on his way but is also happy to join the player group, especially if they are heading for a community of survivors. The man is actually a *Mock Zombie* and spells trouble.

**37% Shepherd of the Damned suddenly appears from his hiding place.** He has been watching our heroes to determine if they are good guys who might be able to help him. He has rescued five individuals (ordinary people), but needs to go back to get three others. The remaining three are being surrounded by zombies and he has only a limited amount of time to get them and out his secret passage before the zombies get to them. He hopes the player characters would be kind enough to escort these five to a drop zone on the outskirts of town. He has a map with a safe route drawn on it. All the group has to do is be quiet and follow the map. If the group agrees, the Shepherd is grateful, turns the people over to them and sneaks away. If anyone offers to accompany him, the Shepherd declines the offer saying that it is best for everyone if he does this alone. Won't accept help.

Of course the supposedly safe path has been compromised, and something (collapsed building, 4D6+20 zombies, large wild dog pack, etc.) blocks the way and the group must take a detour. First they encounter a pack of stray dogs that are not dangerous but bark and make noise before running away. That brings out 1D6+1 zombies (probably can be avoided), and other trouble (more zombies, a lone zombie, 1-4 Flesh Eaters, etc.), before they finally catch a break, get a free path and get to the rendezvous point like the map showed.

To extend this adventure, after a while, everyone realizes the Shepherd and his three remaining damned aren't coming. It's been too long. They must be trapped, hurt or dead. The people at

the rendezvous point have to leave with those who have been rescued before night falls in the next hour or two. They ask the player characters to go back in to find the Shepherd and his little flock of survivors. They can give them a map of where he was supposed to get the refugees, and a trail that is supposed to be safe. They can also leave an SUV for them to transport the people they rescue to a safe campsite or Safe Haven Community. One of the rescue team even volunteers to stay with the vehicle in case the Shepherd is hurt and can't tell them how to get to the safe camp. He's also a paramedic and will wait for as long as he can. Will the heroes do it? If so, they only have one or two hours of light left and need to act fast.

**38% Spray painted on a sign along the road is the following message:** "The Free North American Army has gathered at the town of X," only that town was wiped off the map two months ago.

**39% A series of gunshots echo from a house or building on the horizon.** Upon closer inspection, a little more than 20 zombies can be seen clustered around it. A man can be seen shooting at the zombies from the second floor window. From within the house the sounds of hammers pounding can clearly be heard, signifying that at least two other people are within. Such stands are common across the globe. Whether these survivors need the player characters' help or not is another question entirely.

**40% A dead body laying on the side of the road** in an awkward position. Checking dead bodies is always tricky, because the body could be a dormant zombie. And that is the case with this one, it is a Sloucher or Fast Attack Zombie and wakes up fighting.

**41% A dead body laying on the side of the road** in an awkward position. One hand is clutching a map of the local town or city the body is found in (or nearby). The map has a series of red Xs on it, but no indication of what they indicate. The Xs could be the locations of supply caches, safe houses, inner-city survivor communities inside tall buildings, zombie hot zones, the location of Death Cults, the location of survivors in need, gas stations, medical clinics or the location of any number of things. The only way to find out is to check it out! G.M.s, use your imaginations.

**42% A dead body sitting slumped on the side of the road** wearing a sign that says, "The living here need help." Is that ironic, or was this woman trying to tell heroes like Shepherds of the Damned there are people in need? If the body is examined, a map is found. There are 1D6+2 locations circled in black marker. Are they hideouts of people in need of rescuing, or a trap set by bandits, or Death Cultists who prey on survivors?

**43% A dead body sitting slumped on the side of the road** clutching a sign that says, "I need a ride. Don't worry, I'm not a Creep." Creep is another term for a Mock Zombie, which is exactly what this dormant, severely rotting zombie is! "Hey, thanks for stopping, buddy."

**44% Power plant can be seen in the distance.** What makes this one noteworthy is that smoke is coming from its chimneys and it has lights! It is up an running and providing power to 1D6 communities! However, checking these towns/cities out is even more eerie than blacked out cities. There don't seem to be *any* survivor communities (or cults), but there are plenty of zombies. Investigating the power plant is even weirder: 2D6+8 Pattern

Zombies, per shift, are keeping the power plant running day and night as they repeat their basic work routine. There are 1D4x10 other zombies wandering the power plant and another 1D6x10 in the parking lot filled with cars.

**45% A radio message.** A man has been broadcasting the same message for days, and the signal has been getting stronger. He claims that he has figured out a cure for the infection and can transform the walking dead back into the living. He needs someone to rescue him from his apartment building and he will turn the cure over to whomever helps him. It could be a trap or a clever ploy by a desperate man wanting to be rescued. Could it be true? Can the heroes take the risk to ignore the possibility?

**46% A radio message.** A group of survivors are pleading for Reapers or Soldiers to come rescue them. They are on the top floor and roof of a 28 story building. Their Safe Haven has been compromised and infested with thousands of zombies! The walking dead are bashing or tearing their way through floor after floor of barricades. Residents of the lower floors have already fallen to the monsters (20 people) and they are all the way up to the 22nd floor. They don't have much time left. They're hoping for someone with a helicopter or a plan to ferry them from their rooftop to a neighboring building commando or S.W.A.T. style. Can anyone help?

**47% A Fast Attack Zombie** bursts forth from its hiding place as the party is passing! It screeches and runs off. It will bring more zombies unless it is stopped.

**48% A lone little girl is walking toward the group,** at first she appears to be a Sloucher. She is actually an 8 year old human survivor. She's filthy, in shock and covered in blood and gore not her own (her family's perhaps). If left to wander the streets she will die. If shown kindness, she'll begin to snap out of it. Her mind has blocked out what has happened to her and her family, at least until she comes face to face with her mother or father turned Sloucher. She knows the immediate area well and knows 1D6+3 shortcuts where there are hardly any zombies and a safe place to hide: in the back of a restaurant inside a huge walk in freezer, no longer being refrigerated, that can be opened from inside as well as the outside. According to the girl, the walls are too thick for the zombies to sense anyone inside. She and her family had lived there for three months before they decided to make a run for it. That's when . . . hmmm, she can't remember.

**49% A lone little girl is walking toward the group,** at first she appears to be a Sloucher. She is actually a Mock Zombie who refuses to accept the fact that she is dead. She is as cute as a button and her sickly appearance and seeming fragility only adds to her endearing quality. The little girl will fight her hunger for as long as she can (possibly hours), but when the opportunity to attack a lone individual becomes available, she goes in for the kill. If that never happens, at some point, she can't hold back any longer (she's starving) and turns on the nearest living character and attacks to kill. She honestly wants to be a good person, and if she can be harnessed and used carefully, she could become a valuable weapon in fighting the walking dead.

**50% A lone little girl is walking toward the group,** at first she appears to be human. Then she points and let's loose with the moan! 1D6+5 zombies will respond to her call within 1D4+1 melee rounds unless she is silenced.

**51% 2D6+3 children, ages 6-12, run across the player group's path** a short distance ahead. They fear strangers and run away from our heroes squealing. They run into the gaping maw of a giant sewer or train tunnel. Its their home, but where are their parents? How many others are there inside? Do they need help? Are there zombies around? The only way to find out is to follow them inside and track 'em down.

**52% 2D6+3 children, ages 6-12, run across the player group's path** a short distance ahead. They are screaming and scared. A few moments later, 2D6+1 Slouchers come shambling after them.

**53% 2D6+3 children ages 6-12 run across the player group's path** a short distance ahead. They are laughing and playing and have two collies in their company. They welcome strangers and invite them to come home with them. Is home a survivor community, a Safe Haven, a Retro-Savage commune, a Death Cultists, or a trap? The only way to find out is to follow the kids.

**54% A small boy and a dog are playing on a hill.** They seem oblivious to the 4D6 zombies coming up the hill. Rushing to save the boy and his dog has the following consequences. Roll percentile again.

*01-33%* It's a zombie trap! The kid lures them out, runs when they get close, and two dozen Soldiers wait on the other side of the hill ready to destroy zombies. It works like dream every time.

*34-66%* The kid runs away from the zombies when he sees the heroes coming, but also away from the heroes. The player characters are greeted by six men with rifles and eight men with clubs and blade weapons. They are told to drop their weapons. If they refuse, the men stall until the zombies come over the rise, then run, leaving the heroes to deal with the zombies. If they comply and drop their weapons, they are pushed down the hill to a row of concrete pillars, tied to them and left for the zombies to eat! Retro-Savages or Terror Cultists, or crazy people at work.

*67-00%* It's a bunch of stupid, cocky kids thinking they can outsmart zombies. In addition to the boy and his dog, there are 1D6+5 teens, ages 16-18. Half have maces and clubs, half have shotguns and rifles. All have bicycles to get away when the zombies get too close, and riding down the hill gives them fast momentum right off the bat. Their parents would have a fit if they knew what they were doing. Any heroes who appear to help are likely to get left behind to face the zombies as the kids race away shouting, "Sorry, man. Run."

**55% In a drainage ditch beside a major road** the party hears groaning and thrashing. At the bottom of the ditch is a zombie that was evidently hit by a vehicle and landed at the bottom of the ditch with such force that 50% of the bones in its body were broken on impact. It's a Crawler now and is trying to climb back up to the road. Put it out of its misery or keep on walking? It has a backpack on its back and a canteen on its hip. If slain, our heroes get a sleeping bag, canteen, hunting knife, five days of canned food for one person and a journal detailing his trek from the heart of New York City and through New Jersey when the dead rose.

**56% An automobile mechanics garage** is always a place to check out. During a severe downpour the party is forced to take

refuge inside an abandoned gas station. Within the gas station are three Slouchers. If the party is able to dispatch them they will find 10 gallons of gasoline hidden in the back room in 2 five gallon cans. Discovering these cans will require a search of at least fifteen minutes.

**57% Automobile graveyard.** 2D6x1,000 vehicle pack a length of freeway. Detour is advised, but where does that take you?

**58% The player group is stunned to find** a newly constructed cinder block fortress constructed across the road they are traveling on. This structure must have required several hundred man hours to build in the heart of zombie occupied lands. There is a large wood and steel gate set in the middle of the structure, and a corresponding gate at the opposite side, presumably to allow traffic to pass. To either side of the structure is rough, hilly land that would be almost impossible for a vehicle to cross. The fort is fully manned and the inhabitants picked this spot for a reason, to take as much of a travelers belongings as possible.

They aren't bad people but they are trying to keep their families alive in desperate times. They will demand at least half of the food, water, ammo and extra fuel the player group has as a toll to pass. Failure to comply means turn around and find another way to go. The fort families are very well armed with dozens of military and hunting rifles, but they won't attempt to take by force, only intimidation. A party that treats the fort people with respect and courtesy will be treated have only 30% of their supplies taken, and then people might share information about the surrounding countryside. A search of the area around the fort will reveal over two hundred burial mounds. If asked, the fort people confirm that each mound is stuffed with friends and family who have died here. If the fort is attacked, the people fight back from fortified positions and sniper posts.

**59% The party finds a newly constructed roadblock.** It is a tall, reinforced wood barricade with barbed wire on top and a steel gate set in the middle of the structure. There is a smaller, corresponding gate at the opposite side, presumably to allow traffic to pass. To either side of the structure is rugged, hilly land or water, making going off road not an option. Thankfully, this is a Soldier or Reaper manned operation designed to limit zombies from leaving the nearby city and going into the countryside ahead. It also limits bandits. A pair of guards look over and interview everyone who comes by, and if they seem okay they let them by. They will also answer questions about places up ahead, like don't go here or there, that outpost or trading post is gone, etc.

**60% Trading post.** It could be along the road, at a crossroad, at a survivor village or a Safe Haven Community. Prices are only double for common items, basic survival gear, water and common food items, but 4-10 times for guns, ammo, vehicles, vehicle parts and tires, and other hard to find items. Available items are likely to be limited and many things may be out of stock.

There is also a boardinghouse where travelers can actually sleep in a bed, get a hot meal, and enjoy a hot bath, all for only \$100 in trade goods per night. Those without resources can flop in a designated area outdoors. The place is supposedly free of zombies and completely safe, but no place is completely safe in this world.





**61% You camp or stop to rest near a body of water because you figure it is safe,** you can see for a long way along the coast and the way you came in. It is easy to make a hasty retreat. You even find suitable cover to conceal your life force from zombies if you want to spend the night. Excellent. What you didn't count on are the 4D6 Slouchers under the waves in the water along the bank. Zombies that sense your life energy and are working at climbing out to feed!

**62% You are near a large body of water.** The dock area seems quiet. There are only 1D4 Slouchers wandering around. A *freighter* is docked and it has the promise of a treasure trove in its belly, or nothing at all. Is it worth climbing on board and checking it out? 1D6x10+9 zombies are on board; they are what's left of the crew.

**63% You are near a large body of water.** There is a ship (barge or freighter) about 100 yards/meters off shore. A sign hangs over it that reads: "Survivors. Coffee & Fish to Trade." The ship is inhabited by the original crew (48 people) and 120 refugees that they have taken on board. The vessel still has electricity and some supplies, the people are weary and scared, but in good physical condition. They are interested in trading what they have for what they need. They have a large quantity of dried fish and of coffee. They have enough diesel fuel, drinking water and solar cells to retain electricity for another six months. They are also armed and have a decent amount of ammunition but might want more. They need food and other necessities.

**64% You are near a large body of water.** A sign hanging from the side of a vessel (barge or freighter) anchored about 300

yards/meters from shore reads: "Life ship. Taking survivors. Come aboard." At least that was the intention of these good people when they hung the sign. Unfortunately, things did not turn out so good. There are 342 zombies on board the ship; 80% of them are trapped below deck and behind locked doors. The Ship is in good condition with a working solar power unit and full tanks of diesel. What it may have by way of cargo, if anything, we leave to the G.M. Clearing the ship of zombies will take time and is dangerous work. Are there any living left alive on board? Unlikely but you never know.

**65% You are near a large body of water** and see a ship run aground (barge, freighter or ferry) and under attack from pirates! There is shouting and gunfire. There are 3D6+24 armed pirates looking to commandeer the vessel for themselves. The 110 unarmed civilians will be pressed into service. The 50 crew members will be dealt with as necessary. A group that shows they are strong and determined may be able to not only negotiate a deal with the pirates, but trade goods (especially diesel fuel and food, which they need desperately) for their captives.

**66% Your are near a large body of water.** A barge or freighter has run aground only 50 yards/meters from shore. Calling out to it gets no response – it must be abandoned. Does the group go to investigate? Are there any survivors on board? (Not likely.) Are there zombies? Yes, but only 1D6+3. In the cargo hold is more lumber than any small adventurer or rescue group could use, but it would be a boon to any survivor community. There is also more than one thousand gallons of diesel on the ship, and solar cells, but how does one get the ship back into deep water or the cargo off the vessel?

**67% A train blocks the road.** To get by it, the player group needs to make a one or two mile detour by road, or they can squeeze under or between the boxcars to get by on foot. Bicycles can also squeeze through. Motorcycles are more tricky and are likely to get scratched up trying to pull them across the tracks underneath a boxcar. There are 6D6+36 boxcars, 95% remain locked and unopened. Each one could hold all kinds of amazing resources and goods. Start checking some out, or move on? Of course, there zombies in the area, but not too many (1D6). At least, not at first.

**68% Petroleum refinery.** A good place to get gas, but potentially dangerous as you MUST be super-careful that gunfire does NOT explode the entire compound or refinery. Of course, there are 2D6 zombies wandering around. An additional 4D6 zombies will respond to gunfire, the sound of combat and other loud noises.

**69% Petroleum refinery (or shipyard).** This one is under siege, not by zombies (though they are around), but by 1D4+2 rival factions who all want to control this facility either for profit or their own noble purpose. None are willing to share. The player group may be recruited by one side or another. Or they might hook up with a band of Scroungers who have figured out how to get in and out without being seen by any of the factions. If they are seen, all hell breaks loose.

**70% Truck yard or shipping facility.** There are many different sizes of box trucks and an automobile graveyard. See Resources for an idea for the supplies and resources one can find at places like this. Is it worth scavenging?



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**71% House/building surrounded by scores of the dead zombie bodies**, their heads blown off or smashed in. A big battle took place here. The doors are open. Is it worth investigating? Certainly this suggests there was, at one time, some sort of serious human faction at work in the area. Were they Reapers, Soldiers or Survivors? Are they still around or have they been killed or gone to greener pastures? Maybe there is a message spray painted on a wall inside? Or maybe there are 3D6 zombies waiting for fresh meat.

**72% A sprawling shopping mall.** Let your imagination run wild. Just remember, a part of the parking lot may be an automobile graveyard. Scroungers are likely to be encountered.

**73% A freaking tiger** (or leopard, or African lion, or similar big cat predator) attacks one of the players or an NPC. It has escaped from the zoo and now stalks the countryside (or city streets, in and outside of buildings). G.M.s, this can work over and over again with different animals from the truly exotic to wolves, bobcats, mountain lions, and bears, among others, that will have moved into the abandoned farms, towns and cities looking for food and prey just like human survivors.

**74% A community of survivors (large or small) needs your help.** A monster is stalking their town, attacking, killing and eating people. Turns out to be a pride of 1D6+2 African lions! They are man-eaters now and are stalking everyone in “their” 60 mile (96 km) radius *hunting territory*.

**75% Zoo of the Weird.** Game Masters, you can go as wild as you want with this. While most of the animals have died of starvation, escaped or been killed by zombies, some have survived (probably by eating their fellow animals in the same enclosure). Those animals have been gathered up and are being cared for by a Terror Cult who is using them and the cages and habitats for the cult’s own twisted sport. Only a small area of the zoo is being used. They have wild felines, a couple gorillas, buffalo and other exotic animals that are used in gladiatorial games, for pets and torture, for riding and amusement, etc. They also have various zombies in cages and animal enclosures, as well as human captives they use for their gladiatorial contests, to drop into animal enclosures and watch run from zombies until the humans drop from exhaustion and get eaten and similar sick “sport.” There are ordinary people who need rescuing here, and cultists who need killing.

**Note:** A zoo might also be a place where a Hound Master or Shepherd of the Damned might use as a refuge or base of opera-

tion. It’s wide open, for the most part, so the zombie presence is minimal. The cages and pens can be used to keep zombie out as well as hold animals in, there were animals that needed rescuing/freeing (at least from the standpoint of the Hound Master), plus there are veterinary facilities and medicine. A zoo, or part of a zoo, could make a great city or city outskirts oasis or Safe Haven Community. Think about it, most zoos are fenced in, too. Clear the place of zombies (or most of them), pick a location toward the center of the zoo where the walking dead can’t sense or see people easily, and you are good to go!

**76% Surprise rescue.** Something went terribly wrong and suddenly you are being converged upon by a horde of zombies. (2D4x10+60 or more!) Suddenly, a taxi cab (or truck or other vehicle, perhaps even an armored vehicle) rockets through an opening, knocking several zombies out of the way as it screeches to a stop near the player characters. The driver sticks his head out the window and shouts, “Get in, fellas, I’ll save you.” It’s a Mock Zombie cab driver! He is decaying badly, and his ear drops off as he waves you in, shouting, “Hurry, get in.” He really is here to make a rescue. Do you hop in?

**77% A cluster of 3D6 zombies shambling along the side of the road.** They are all Slouchers and should be easy for the group to handle, except for one detail – somebody is putting helmets on zombies! The assorted knot of the undead have a variety of football and motorcycle helmets covering their heads, but why in the name of all that is holy would someone put helmets on zombies? Is this the work of a Thinker, a lunatic, or a Death Cult? If so, is that person or group nearby? Are there other dangers lurking around the corner?

**78% A dog wanders onto the road**, the poor thing is thin and limping. It is happy to see the player group and limps over to them, wagging its tail and whimpering. 1D4+1 Flesh-Eating Zombies run out after the dog. If the player group fights the zombies the creatures retreat after they lose 75% of their S.D.C. If the dog was rescued and treated well, it becomes a loyal pet and can serve as an excellent watchdog and companion.

**79% A dog wanders onto the road**, the poor thing is thin and limping. It is happy to see the player group and comes right over to them. If the party treats the dog well it will become a loyal watchdog and companion.

**80% A dog wanders onto the road**, the poor thing is thin and limping. It is happy to see the player group, stops, barks and jerks its head as if it wants them to follow it. If anyone approaches the animal it wags its tail and starts to trot back the way it came, looking back to see if the player group is following it. If they do, it leads them to a *Hound Master* who is hurt and hiding. 1D4+3 Flesh-Eating Zombies are still searching for him and will appear any minute. If the player characters don’t follow the dog, a Hound Master, pulling himself along with his staff appears on the road. He has an injured leg that is bleeding. “Run,” he shouts, “Run.” He clearly needs help as 4D4 Slouchers appear a moment later in hot pursuit.

**81% A dog comes charging out from the underbrush**, races past one of the player characters, and leaps at the zombie Crawler that is silently hanging from a low branch and about to swing onto the back of one of the heroes. If the Crawler is slain and the dog survives, it is happy to join the group. It is a trained zombie hunter. It also keeps wanting to go a particular direction. If the player characters follow, it leads them 3D4

miles (4.8 to 19 km) away and to either a Hound Master training camp or a small, hidden, Safe Haven Community, the animal's home.

**82% A healthy survivor walking down the road,** he is looking to join up with others for mutual protection. He has a supply of antibiotics, a first aid kit, a shotgun and 60 slugs of ammo, a Katana sword, food rations for two weeks and other basic gear. He also claims to be a Scrounger (3rd level) and knows where there are a number of places full of goods he and "associates" could sell/trade at a great profit, including a gun shop full of weapons and ammo. And he's willing to share, 50/50 if they want in. The locations are all in a nearby town or city, and in his head. He will not reveal their location unless they can cut a deal. He leaves out the one little detail that he got his last team of "partners" killed trying to get the loot. He is Anarchist, greedy and reckless.

**83% We need medical assistance!** A small secluded town is in desperate need of help, they lost everyone with medical knowledge and are suffering from some kind of illness – flu or something. It's not the Wave, but half of their 197 residents are ill and getting sicker. They are willing to trade a large amount of goods for the services of a person with medical training. The town has a large stock of canned food, cereal, and dried food, well water, as well as basic gear like clothing, shoes, boots and blankets. The kicker is they think the sickness is the result of a group of disgruntled former townsfolk. They were expelled from the town for hoarding and stealing, and are now part of a small group of thieves, vandals and misanthropes (1D8+5) who, among other foul acts, are staking corpses in the water up-river of the town, contaminating the water supply and doing other things to hurt the town. This gang of vengeful survivors are all first to second level Ordinary People, Miscreant alignment and vindictive. Stop these villains and save a town. Or is there something more going on?

**84% The sound of an airplane overhead.** A prop driven transport plane 10 miles (16 km) in the distance. One of the engines is billowing black smoke and the craft is losing altitude. A moment later, it drops below the treeline and has, presumably, crashed. There is no fireball or thick plume of smoke, so it is very possible the pilot (and others?) survived the crash landing. If the player group decides to investigate they find a vintage World War II transport aircraft belly landed on a clear section of a freeway or highway or a field. What happens next is up to the G.M. Some possibilities include the following:

Crew is dead and the cargo is whatever the G.M. wants it to be.

Pilot and crew (4 people total) are missing. They may have run off or they may have been taken by other survivors, locals, mercenaries, bandits, cultists or Retro-Savages. Rescuing them would certainly win their favor.

The aircraft and crew may be part of a major human Safe Haven Community or military operation of Apocalyptic Soldiers. Either way, it represents a large population of people and safety, but where is it? The crew would know. The crew could lead our heroes (and other survivors?) to it (or not). Could they even be part of a secret government operation to reclaim the country!? (By the way, that's no.)

**85% The sound of motorcycles can be heard in the distance.** A group of 20 motorcycles approach from the east. They are a legion of well armed and supplied Reapers heading for the nearby town. The town has been radioing for help for over a week and claims to have supplies to provide for the heroes who help them. Recently, zombie incursions have increased. They need someone to help clear out the surrounding area of the walking dead. The Reapers are happy to let other heroes join them on this mission and share in the supplies. The zombies are leaderless and hungry, and clearing the ring is relatively straightforward. The town has seventy survivors, and a warehouse full of instant oatmeal and other cereal as well as other basic supplies.

**86% The sound of motorcycles can be heard in the distance.** A group of 20 motorcycles approach from the east. They are a legion of well armed and supplied Reapers heading for the nearby town. The town has been radioing for help for over a week and claims to have supplies, including fuel and vehicles, to provide the heroes who help them. Recently, zombie incursions have increased. They need someone to help clear out the surrounding area of the walking dead. The Reapers are happy to let other heroes join them on this mission and share in the supplies. When our heroes arrive they are too late. There are signs of recent combat everywhere, the streets are deserted and 1D4 Slouchers shamle out at the welcoming committee. "There may still be survivors to rescue," barks the leader of the Reaper legion. "And there are certainly walkin' dead that need killin'."

**87% The sound of motorcycles can be heard in the distance.** A legion of well armed and supplied Reapers or Soldiers are heading for the nearby town. The town has been radioing for help for over a week and claims to have supplies, including fuel and vehicles, to provide the heroes who help them. The Reapers are happy to let other heroes join them on this mission and share in the supplies. When our heroes arrive they are greeted by the Deputy Mayor and Sheriff, who explain the message was all a hoax by a disgruntled inhabitant. The problem has been taken care of, they are all welcome to spend the night and enjoy hot meals and drinks for their inconvenience. Something doesn't seem right.

A Death Cult (3 Death Priests and 24 cultists) or a Mock Zombie has taken control of the town. Fifteen Slouchers, five Fast Attack Zombies and a Thinker are part of the town's new leaders enforcement squad, not to mention the cultists (and priests or Mock Zombie) themselves. The town of 156 are too frightened to fight back and have accepted their fate. All but one apparently: the person who has been transmitting the radio message for help. Now that heroes are present, he or she will try to make contact and get them to help. Meanwhile, the evil forces in town seek this individual to kill him, and hope the heroes in town move on without incident. How things unravel from here we leave to the G.M.

**88% The sound of motorcycles can be heard in the distance.** A legion of well armed and supplied Reapers or Soldiers are coming down the road, only these aren't heroes. After fighting zombies and saving lives for a hot meal and handshake, they've decided to quit the hero business and sell their services. They are mercenaries now. Guns for hire, and they are happy to let the player characters join their band (1D6+12 of them currently and looking for more strong fighters). A town up ahead

has been radioing for help for over a week, and they hope to make them one of their clients. Where things go from here depends on a number of things, but all will be exciting.

**89% Smoke.** Smoke on the horizon means people or combat. Investigation could reveal the campsite of Shepherds of the Damned looking for some help rescuing people, Reapers or Soldiers on a mission who could use a hand, a band of Scroungers heading for the city, a band of survivors who need help, or a house or building on fire as the survivors battle a horde of 2D6+6 zombies or . . . give it some thought.

**90% A radio broadcast,** but the curious thing is that the transmissions are encoded. Are they government transmissions? Could the government and military be rising to take charge? If the players manage to track down the source of the transmissions they find a squat concrete building that was once the local county seat. The building was once heavily fortified, but those fortifications have been breached. There is a solar generator on the roof that keeps the building powered and all of the automated equipment working. The broadcasts are the automated messages of the regional communications network, they are encrypted and have been broadcasting since the opening days of the outbreak. What is the message? Are there survivors or soldiers in the area? It looks like somebody had tried to clear the town of zombies at one point, but something bad happened here. What happens next?

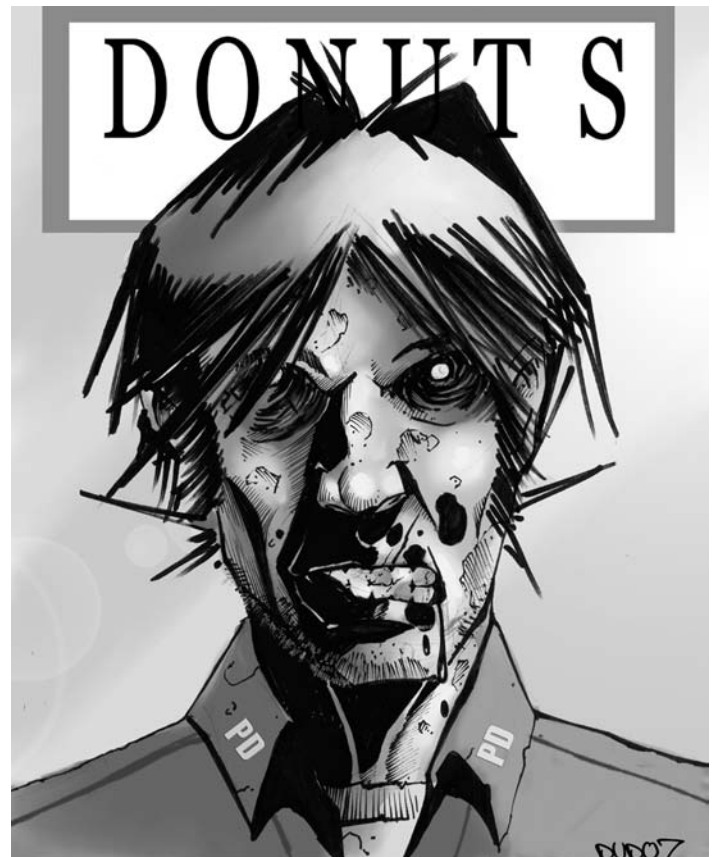
**91%** During a quiet moment, the player group is accosted by a group of *wild children!* Ranging in ages from nine to seventeen, these children are the survivors of a national youth scouting organization. They had been on a yearly camping retreat when the Wave happened, and they have been living by their wits and surviving ever since. They are armed and battle hardened, and know the area in a hundred mile (160 km) radius like the backs of their hands. The first thing to do is get them to stop stealing your supplies, talk and work together. Their adult supervisors and a few kids were killed by bandits, and the kids have seen plenty of terrible things, so they do not trust people easily.

**92% A female (Mock Zombie) approaches the player characters with an offer.** She wishes to join with the group in return for their protection from a band of living humans out to kill her. If the heroes protect and escort her out of town, she will take them to a military armory stocked with assault rifles, grenade launchers, rifle grenades and tons of ammunition at another location in a neighboring town. As is typical of these zombies, she insists she is human and that the people out to kill her are *bad guys*, like Reapers gone bad or cultists. This is, of course, a lie, she has been quietly stalking and killing people of a survivor community and has only recently been discovered. She is on the run with her adversaries hot on her heels, and they will fight anyone trying to protect her. She's hoping greed or stupidity will help her survive. If not, she's got two children locked away in a secret place. Let her go and she'll let them go. Kill her, and they die too. Nice lady.

**93%** An explosion rocks the area near the player characters! Some fools have gotten a tank running and are now running amok. They may cause more harm than help. The people responsible is a quartet of Scrounger buddies, and 1D4 Soldiers – all are young and bent on revenge against zombies and cultists. They mean well but are blinded by rage and frustration.

**94% Abandoned ambulance.** Always a potential resource for medical supplies. This one looks like it has been in use recently. There is blood on the driver and passenger seats and on the ground outside, but no bodies. Surprise, in the back of the ambulance is an injured paramedic. She is in rough shape, but alive . . . well, sort of. She's a Half-Living. She doesn't know how she survived. They were jumped, first by a half dozen bandits, and then they were all attacked by zombies. One of her teammates must have come back and patched her up. His fate is unknown, though if possible, she'd like to find him and return the favor. On top of that, she was on a mission to help some people in a tiny survivor community nearby, and asks the player group to help her help them.

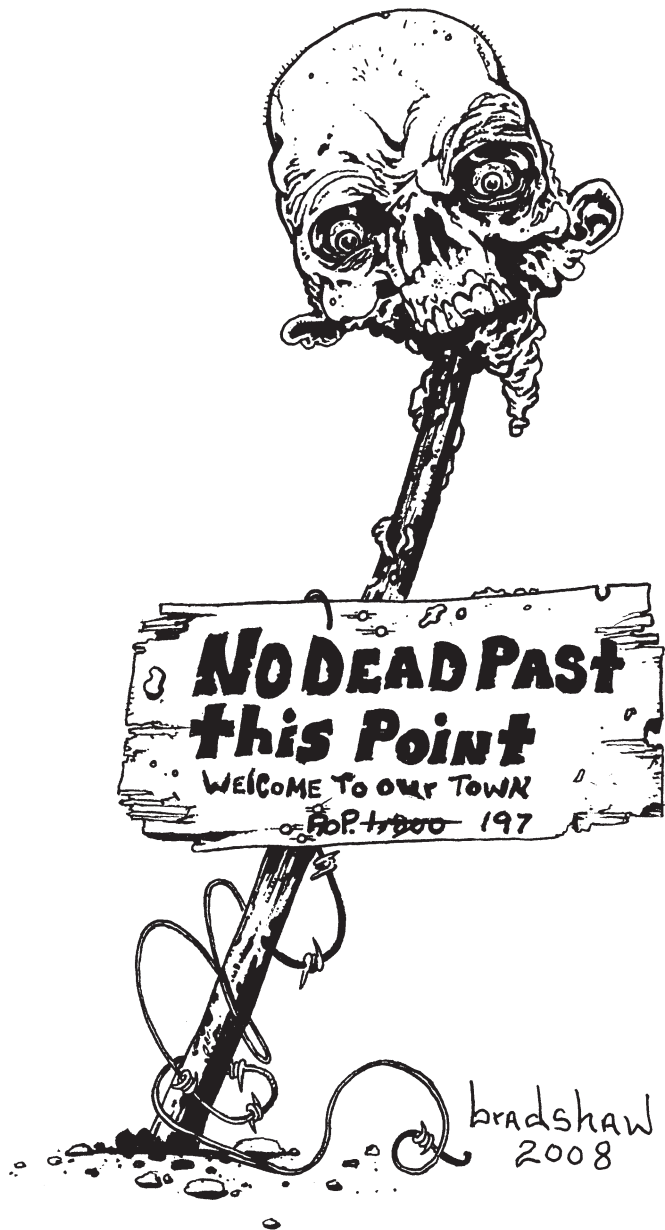
**95% Abandoned hospital.** Always dangerous. Every hospital is where the dead first rose and the first victims of the Zombie Apocalypse perished, to rise again as the walking dead. They are always filled with zombies, and survivors are often lured to a grim fate inside. In addition, some people claim hospitals are haunted and bad luck. That having been said, they are a source of medicine, medical supplies and equipment, as well as blankets, sheets, clothing, and even food and portable generators. As our heroes ponder whether they should go in or move on by, there is a scream, gunshots and barking from the third floor.



**96% Police station (State or Local).** Squad cars, walkie-talkies, weapons, ammo, bulletproof vests, maps and other supplies could be inside. Too risky?

**97% The underground.** Some cities and towns have underground subway systems, some have old buildings, tunnels, mines, caves or networks of sewers under their streets. Going deep and dark is always a dangerous proposition as zombies

have no fear of the dark and like confined places, and people shine like fireflies in the dark. Survivors, however, find underground hiding places alluring as a potential Safe Haven or hide-out, so survivors sometimes try to establish bases, safe houses, and supply caches in dark underground places. Of course, so do bandits, mercenaries, hermits, crazy people, wild animals and Terror Cults. What's down this one?



**98% Weird Town.** A community of paranoid survivors who want nothing to do with the outside world. The little community is probably a makeshift military compound with barricaded streets, armed sentry points, fencing and barbed wire and a militia armed with assault weapons, shotguns and side arms patrolling their streets and perimeter line. No zombies here. No outsiders either. Most of the families are just scared and trust the armed men as their protectors. They make a point of not knowing what the militia is up to, and go along with things because they are terrified and the militia promises to keep them safe. The militia is mostly men and they've decided they need breeding stock if humanity is to survive, so they are capturing women and

enslaving them for sex and childbearing! Some of these guys are just bad people, others are half crazy. Women beware. Could our heroes be looking for a teenage girl or a young woman or two who went missing from a survivor community or group of travelers in the region?

**99% The rumors have been circulating** for a month or so now, Death Cults establishing human food pens in which women are impregnated, give birth, and their babies taken away for purposes unknown, but the rumors are they are slain in ritual sacrifices and/or fed to zombies! There are also tales of zombie triage centers or hospitals in which Death Cultists sew back lost limbs and decapitated heads. The player characters now believe these rumors because they just stumbled across such an operation. The question is, can they rescue the 1D4 dozen women (and/or half a dozen babies) from their clutches?

**100% Warehouse district.** Light on zombies, ripe with promise. Who knows what might be hidden inside any of these 3D6+8 warehouses? Semi-trucks and trailers, construction vehicles, delivery trucks, and all kinds of cargo, supplies, spare parts, and such. If there is a downside it is the warehouses dedicated to one company are likely to have only a few or even one item. So that could mean a million brackets for a bucket seat to a Ford truck (effectively worthless) or a million blankets, or canned goods, or . . . who knows what. Warehouses that are "storage" or "sort" locations that handle multiple clients may have an array of goods (e.g., office furniture and supplies, grocery produce, etc.) but in much smaller numbers (two gross of this, a dozen of those). Most will be dedicated warehouses with 1D6 different, related items (e.g., six different types of brackets, or screws or whatever). A warehouse might also make for a good safe house or hideout.

**101% Safe Haven Community.** As described in the Resource section of this book, Safe Haven Communities are towns and communities that have been (mostly) cleared of zombies and inhabited by survivors. Not just survivors, but people who are committed to helping other people, providing a safe, stable environment with laws and order, and rebuilding human society. Most have a militia or Soldiers or Reapers to defend it, as well as Shepherds of the Damned, Hound Masters, Scroungers and bands of mixed teams who go into the zombie occupied towns, cities and zones to rescue other survivors, get needed supplies and destroy zombies and evildoers.

Game Masters may want to have the player group's base of operation based at a Safe Haven Community. The advantage to this is that the characters are not only committed to the community, its people and its needs and survival, but the leaders will send them on specific missions. Here are some typical missions.

**Escort/Protection.** Our heroes are the muscle assigned to escort and protect a supply run, cargo extraction, rescue team, reconnaissance team, Shepherd of the Damned, etc.

**Extraction: Cold Zone.** Going in to rescue, retrieve, escort or support a fellow community member, team or survivors (or a special resource) in an *unknown area*, but one thought to have a low zombie threat threshold. Other dangers and inhabitants unknown. Combat is not anticipated, but use extreme caution.

**Extraction: Hot Zone.** Going into an environment/area known to be dangerous, like a zombie infested city, to rescue or support

another team from the Safe Haven Community to get out alive. Combat is anticipated.

Extraction: Survivor Rescue. Survivors are reported to be at location “X”, investigate, rescue and get them out of there. Likely to bring them back to the Safe Haven Community.

Reconnaissance: Guard Duty. Guarding and securing a specified position.

Reconnaissance: Perimeter Patrol. Scouting around the edge of the community to make sure zombies and other bad guys are not skulking around or planning a raid.

Reconnaissance: Scouting. Typically involves scouting around the surrounding area beyond the perimeter of the community. May also involve investigating reports or sounds of trouble, suspicious characters, mercenaries or travelers in the area, vagabonds, Retro-Savages or Death Cultists, and of course, zombies.

Reconnaissance: Urban Scouting Run. Going into a city or town to scout out, map, and even mark potential resources, ways in and out, and notable features and dangers, zombie infestations, wild dogs, gangs, cults, etc.

Rescue: Investigation and Recovery. Someone or something (resources, map, etc.) has been stolen, destroyed or gone missing. Find out who, how, why, and where, as well as assess what is necessary to reacquire. If the team believes it can reacquire, they should go for it. If not they are to report back, get help and participate in a larger recovery effort or tactical strike.

Rescue: Search and Recovery. A Scrounger team or some person or team of community operatives has failed to check in, is late, or gone MIA. The player group is sent in to follow their trail and locate them to, a) find out what happened to them, b) bring them out alive, or c) return with their bodies or evidence of their fate.

Rescue: Search and Strike Operation. A child, towns person, protector, scout or valuable resource has gone missing. You *know* who has him/her/it and it’s your team’s job to track down those responsible and bring them to justice. May involve rescuing the missing person(s) if still alive, or the resource, intact. Killing the perpetrators in a commando style raid may be part of the mission.

Supply Run: Find and return with needed fuel, ammo, guns, medicine, food or just about anything else that might be needed. We need X, go into zombie infested city Y and get us what we need. This might be something small that can be carried on the character’s person, in a backpack, in a crate to large or heavy cargo that needs to be trucked out. This may include finding or protecting those in search of specific items, herbs for holistic medicine, etc.

Search and Destroy: Targeted Enemies. A commando-style raid to wipe out a group of villains such as raiders, bandits, kid-nappers, slavers, etc. who have been harassing and hurting the community.

Search and Destroy: Terror & Death Cults. The harassment and elimination of people and groups who worship, protect and use zombies, and/or imprison, torture or eat humans. May also involve undermining enemy operations, stealing their resources and similar.

Search and Destroy: Zombies. The only good zombie is a dead one. Typically to clear out an area and diminish the threat

level. May involve targeted operations, e.g. wipe out Flesh Eaters or Thinkers, or other specific types of zombies.

Support. Help Hound Masters, Shepherds of the Damned, Scroungers, Soldiers, Reapers and other Survivors as well as guarding/protecting a newly discovered resource, survivors/travelers in need in and away from the community, defense of the community, etc.

## Random Zombie Encounters

**01-05%** 1D4 Slouchers. Can you kill it/them before the moan brings more?

**06-10%** A solitary Crawler attacks. It has the element of surprise. Can you kill it before it starts to moan?

**11-15%** 1D6+1 Slouchers.

**16-20%** 1D4 Flesh-Eating Zombies on the prowl.

**21-25%** 2D6+6 Slouchers.

**26-30%** 1D6 Fast Attack Zombies screech and attack. 1D6 Slouchers show up 1D4 melee rounds later.

**31-35%** One lone Thinker who has been following your trail, it is as surprised to actually confront you as you are to see it. The Thinker turns to run away. Do you pursue to kill or let it go? If allowed to run off, roll percentile to see what happens next: 01-25% Nothing happens, the creature was just happy to get away. 26-75% The Thinker returns 2D6 minutes later with 1D4 Fast Attack Zombies, 1D6 Crawlers and 2D6 Slouchers. 76-00% Returns with 1D6+2 Slouchers, two Fast Attack Zombies and a Death Priest.



**36-40%** 3D6+6 Slouchers.

**41-45%** One Pattern Zombie going about its business.

**46-50%** An attractive, pale looking woman (or man). Seems happy to see the heroes and asks their help in leading her out this godforsaken hell hole. She is really a Mock Zombie but is convincing in acting alive.

**51-55%** 1D4+2 Fast Attack Zombies.

**56-60%** A solitary Sloucher is dormant in a corner. If you are quiet and don't get too close it can be avoided without waking up.

**61-65%** 1D4 Crawlers.

**66-70%** 5D6+12 Slouchers.

**71-75%** Mock Zombie who looks like a half-rotten corpse, but insists he's human and can help the player group if they let him.

**76-80%** Thinker Zombie accompanied by 1D4+5 Slouchers.

**81-85%** 1D4+3 Flesh-Eating Zombies.

**86-90%** 1D6x10+24 Slouchers, 2D6 Crawlers, 2D4 Fast Attack Zombies and one Thinker.

**91-95%** 2D4 Fast Attack Zombies try to lead the characters into an ambush where a Thinker or Mock Zombie (or Death Priest) and 3D6 other zombies await.

**96-00%** 1D6x100 Slouchers.

## 100 Random Corpse Searches

The player characters have just finished taking down a couple dozen zombies, now what? Of course they are going to want to search the bodies. Or our heroes find a dead body (make sure it's not a dormant zombie first). As a quick G.M. tool, roll on this table to determine what is found. Only items of note are listed. Most bodies will have some amount of clothing, belt, shoes, and other apparel, but whether they are usable or not is up to the Game Master. Likewise, many bodies have a wallet or purse, but money and credit cards are worthless. G.M.s, please feel free to add or change the items found.

**01%** A package of hard candies, and a 3 inch (7.5 cm) pocket knife.

**02%** A religious medallion, a handful of loose change, and a spoon.

**03%** 1D6+1 shotgun shells and a can of warm cola.

**04%** Nothing but lint.

**05%** A wallet with a driver's license, six credit cards and \$500. Too bad money isn't worth spit anymore.

**06%** Leather jacket in good condition, handkerchief, and a set of keys. 01-50% chance the car key operates one of the nearby vehicles.

**07%** .38 caliber revolver with five rounds in the gun and an extra 2D6+3 bullets in one of the pockets.

**08%** Machete and wallet with two credit cards, six family photos, and \$67.

**09%** A canteen half full of contaminated water, needs to be sterilized before it can be used, crowbar (large), and a sack of rotten fruit.

**10%** One chocolate bar, a ball peen hammer, and pocket chain.

**11%** One refillable lighter, a pack of cigarettes, a knife (1D6 damage), and a gold cross on a gold chain.

**12%** One flash drive containing a cookbook, two bottles of water (good), and a broken baseball bat.

**13%** A map of the city, a handheld GPS that is still getting a satellite signal, and a bottle of water.

**14%** Yo-yo, an unopened package of gum, and a rosary.

**15%** Handheld video game, bottle of beer and a pocket watch.

**16%** PDA in the pocket and a working wristwatch.

**17%** A purse with I.D., lipstick, makeup, facial tissue, pen flashlight, a pair of earrings, \$60 and personal items.

**18%** Pill bottle with 18 prescription strength sleeping pills or painkillers.

**19%** One vial of clear liquid (a hallucinogen).

**20%** Brass knuckles, a roll of quarters (worth \$10), and a 9mm ammo clip with 13 rounds (the gun must have been dropped).

**21%** 2 Chinese throwing stars, a disposable lighter and an empty wallet.

**22%** 3D6 M-80 firecrackers in a plastic bag, and a book of matches.

**23%** Wristwatch, notepad, black pen, and a laser pointer on a key chain. The car key does not seem to be for any vehicle nearby.

**24%** Leather jacket, 2D6 shotgun slugs in one pocket, 1D4 buckshot shells in another, 1D4 road flares in the back pocket, a wallet with I.D. and \$80 in the front pants pocket and a sawed-off shotgun laying under the body. Body is lying face down.

**25%** Dog whistles, a dog leash and a small resealable bag of 28 doggie treats.

**26%** Disposable camera and a hand drawn map to "the church."

**27%** Pocket book of dirty jokes, a pair of scissors and a roll of duct tape.

**28%** Wristwatch and a backpack with 1D4 human skulls inside.

**29%** Can of pepper spray, a bottle of water and pocket change.

**30%** Taser (no charge, but rechargeable) and a walkie-talkie.

**31%** Book about zombies (fiction), a silver crucifix, 1D4 wooden stakes and a mallet.

**32%** Polarized sunglasses and a medium-sized leather satchel (empty) with shoulder strap.

**33%** Reaper's Survival Guide, a blood-caked crowbar, six candles, a canteen, and a box of wooden matches.

**34%** Decoder ring and 2D6 comic books rolled up and stuffed in an inner pocket of the coat.

**35%** Bottle opener and a six pack of beer.

**36%** Dental floss, tube of toothpaste, a bottle of antiseptic and a bar of soap. All are new and still in unopened packages.

**37%** Pewter flask filled with vodka – the body is dressed in a hooded cloak with a death's head emblem on it. Death Cult Priest or cultist?

**38%** Rodeo champion belt buckle, pocket knife, leather saddlebags, and 20 foot (6.1 m) length of rope.

**39%** Compass, local road map, and a black Sharpie.

**40%** Pack of bubble gum (grape) and keys to the SUV half-way down the block. Inside the vehicle, if people look, is a bonanza of goods: a case of bottled water (32 bottles), 3D6+24 canned goods (various), a package of flour and sugar, a bottle of whiskey, two gallon plastic can of gasoline, four blankets, a crowbar, a hunting rifle, 144 rounds of ammunition, 1D6 road flares.

**41%** Voltmeter and pocket tool kit.

**42%** Eyeglass repair kit, a pair of sunglasses, empty eyeglass case, and an empty wallet.

**43%** 1D6 power bars, a package of hard candy and a bottle of rum.

**44%** Leather driving gloves and motorcycle helmet.

**45%** Claw hammer and a box of 96 two inch nails.

**46%** Handcuffs (no key), 9mm pistol (has 7 rounds left), a police officer's badge, and a nightstick.

**47%** A club or mace hangs from a belt, so does a machete.

**48%** Blood sugar meter, 3 safety pins and a tire iron.

**49%** Leather trench coat, holster with ten .45 caliber bullets, .45 automatic pistol still in the holster and wristwatch. A crowbar lays near the body.

**50%** First aid kit, medium flashlight and a pack of four extra batteries that fit the flashlight.

**51%** Silver religious medallion, wooden crucifix and a bible.

**52%** Mechanical pencil with lead, pocket-sized sketchbook.

**53%** 1D4 cans of spray paint and small can of kerosene.

**54%** Knife and fork set and a working wristwatch.

**55%** 14 silver dollars (rare and valuable), each in a plastic container.

**56%** MP3 player (loaded with 1000 country music tunes).

**57%** Tarot cards and a manga-sized role-playing game.

**58%** Set of gaming dice, playing cards, and poker chips.

**59%** Football player's shoulder padding (A.R. 8, S.D.C. 20), and a football helmet (A.R. 9, S.D.C. 16).

**60%** Hiking boots in excellent condition, winter gloves, scarf and thermal vest.

**61%** 1D4+4 road flares and a tool kit.

**62%** Point-blank bullet proof vest.

**63%** Diver's watch and a can of sardines.

**64%** A can of soda (orange) and a pen flashlight.

**65%** Swiss Army knife and a utility belt with six pouches.

**66%** Backpack full of camping gear, including a small flashlight, compass, roll of string, pocket knife, and package of peanuts.

**67%** Pair of good quality binoculars and an empty thermos.

**68%** Four eight packs of AA batteries and a battery tester.

**69%** Tiny stuffed penguin and a .44 magnum with five rounds.

**70%** Coil of fishing line (50 lb/22.5 kg test) and thermos of cold coffee.

**71%** Chemistry textbook, a hunting knife, a canteen and an arctic sleeping bag.

**72%** Laptop computer, digital camera and a meat cleaver (1D6 damage).

**73%** Gas mask, army helmet, and wristwatch.

**74%** Ski mask, an empty duffle bag and one hand grenade.

**75%** Passive nightvision goggles or a telescopic gun scope.

**76%** Stethoscope, bottle of antibiotics (60 pills), and a book of matches.

**77%** Small butane torch and a welder's mask and gloves.

**78%** Roll of duct tape and 12 feet (3.6 m) of copper wire.

**79%** Mini-Uzi and a box of 101 extra rounds!

**80%** Binoculars and a hatchet.

**81%** Reading glasses and a magnifying glass.

**82%** Sawed-off shotgun hung around the neck on a leather strap and 2D6+2 solid slug rounds in the pants pockets.

**83%** Bottle of hand sanitizer and a box of plastic gloves.

**84%** Bag of corn chips, a jar of salsa, a liter bottle of cola soda, plus a Remington 12 gauge shotgun with 2D6+26 slugs.

**85%** 9mm pistol with no bullets (needs cleaning), and a small package of chocolate chip cookies (unopened).

**86%** Rain poncho (good quality), crowbar and survival knife.

**87%** Katana; Japanese long sword.

**88%** Brochure for a local amusement park, a book of constellations, and a telescope in a duffle bag-style carrying case.

**89%** Key to a 1984 Plymouth Duster. Inside the vehicle is a spare car battery, case of motor oil, jumper cables, a case of bottled water, two blankets, and a baseball bat.

**90%** Mini-first aid kit, pocket knife and a bicycle laying nearby.

**91%** Heavy leather motorcycle jacket, disposable lighter, pack of cigarettes (unopened), baseball cap and a set of keys. One of those keys start the motorcycle laying on its side and half covered in newspapers and leaves.

**92%** Calculator (solar powered), notepad and a black marker.

**93%** Dried goods, two 8 ounce packages of almonds, salted peanuts, trail mix, dried apples, plus five days worth of canned food in a backpack.

**94%** Twenty feet (6.1 m) of rope and a grappling hook, plus a compass, wristwatch, hiking boots, bedroll, travel guide for that state (or province) and road map of the city and surrounding countryside.

**95%** Two boxes of ammo for a 7.56 hunting rifle; 96 rounds total.

**96%** Survival knife and a bag of canned goods: 12 cans of tuna, 8 cans of vegetable soup, 8 cans of tomato sauce, 8 cans of beans, two boxes of spaghetti noodles, and a bottle of ketchup.

**97%** One vintage Colt .45 with one fully loaded magazine and 52 loose rounds, a pocket atlas and a bottle of aspirin.

**98%** Bolt cutters, hacksaw, a 2 foot (0.6 m) length of pipe and an acetylene torch with full tank of fuel.

**99%** Chainsaw and an 8-roll package of toilet paper.

**100%** 2D6+6 sticks of dynamite, an equal number of fuses, four pounds of C4 and a detonator! Who was this guy?



# Game Rules

**Dead Reign™** is a true post-apocalypse setting. The dead have risen, human civilization has fallen, two-thirds of the population has become the walking dead, and our heroes are survivors fighting for their lives.

The player characters may be heroic, but they are not super-heroes. For the most part, they are ordinary people fighting against impossible odds in a world gone mad. As strange as this might sound, the fact that the characters are *ordinary people* placed under extraordinary circumstances makes the game all the more dynamic and dramatic. It's not Superman or the X-Men fighting zombies, it's *you*, me, your next-door neighbors and people like us battling for our very survival. Battling against the walking dead. It's epic and fun. So dig in, roll up your character and have fun.

**If you have never role-played before**, you're in for a treat, because there is no gaming experience as vibrant, exciting and interactive. New players should follow one golden rule: *Sit back and have fun*.

At first glance, a role-playing game can look intimidating. Page after page of rules and information. How can you ever learn it all? Well, relax. First of all, *you* don't have to learn *everything* there is to this game. That's why you have this handy book as a companion and reference.

Second, a lot of the material is fun to read, but it's not stuff you must know. As a player, you don't need to understand every little nuance of the game, that's the *Game Master's* job. All you need to know are the basics of how to create a character, how skills and special abilities apply to that character, how combat works and which dice to roll. That's pretty much it.

When you try a role-playing game for the first time, it's natural if the experience feels a little odd or confusing. The text is filled with terms like S.D.C. and P.P.E., and "2D6" this and "2D4" that, and lots of other strange terms that may seem like an incomprehensible secret language you can scarcely wrap your head around. You might need help in rolling up your character, picking out skills and equipment, as well as figuring out which dice to roll. Don't worry! This will pass quickly. By the third or fourth time you've role-played (if not sooner), you should stop feeling like a fish out of water.

The more you play, the easier things get and the more comfortable you'll feel playing. Besides, role-playing games are all about the adventure, the story, and your character's role in that story.

## How to Role-Play

Role-playing games are really just an advanced form of regular board games. In fact, they are so advanced they no longer

use a board and the playing pieces are the characters in each player's imagination. Pretty cool already, and you haven't even started playing.

Some of the elements remain the same as a board game: you still need paper and pencil, dice and players, but that's where the similarities end. Role-playing games are all about *unleashing your imagination*.

## Let's Take It One Step at a Time

### Imagine the Scene

Picture a basement. There is an open step staircase leading down. The walls are covered in white paint that age has turned yellow, with large cracks, chips and blotches revealing the red brick underneath. If you turn to look directly opposite from the stairs, the whole basement lies before you. An automatic washing machine and dryer are along the left wall, with water hoses connecting the washer to the large laundry tub and sink next to it. Directly across from the appliances looms the huge iron belly of an antiquated gas furnace, its large, old-style heating pipes weaving across the ceiling like the arms of a metallic octopus. Dust covered storage boxes, old newspapers, rags and jars lean against the walls in scattered stacks. In the far wall is the door to a small pantry, a workroom and a large, old coal bin that hasn't been used since the 1960s. A glance at the glass block windows that rim the right and left walls shows that it's getting dark outside.

**Can you picture this scene?** Try to keep the mental image in your mind. Don't worry if you forget the details. One of the great things about role-playing is the way your memory is improved with practice. Now you are ready for the next step . . .

### Imagine the Setting

A foul odor is mingled with the musty air – the smell of rotting flesh. That could mean a decomposing animal or the presence of one or more zombies! There are numerous places zombies could lay dormant, but it's the pantry door that has caught your eye. It yawns a foot and a half open. Beyond the door is only blackness. Utter blackness. Suddenly, a hoarse, inhuman chuckling begins to rise from below the steps.

Like watching a film, the scene is established, and now our attention is focused on a specific location in the overall scene – the stairs under your feet! We have also established an atmosphere and the beginning of action.

Got all that? Good. Now let's figure out where *you*, the player, fit into this.

### Imagine Your Character

Now here comes the tricky part. *You* are not in the basement, but there is somebody whose eyes you see through. That person is *your character*. An imaginary persona that exists only as stats on a sheet of paper and in your imagination. This is your *playing piece* in the game. Just like an actor assuming a role for a movie, *you* play a fictitious character in the game.

It is your imaginary character standing on those basement stairs. It is your imaginary character who has come searching for family or supplies. It is your character who reacts and interacts with the other playing pieces – the other player characters.

Generally, you will spend an hour or more developing a player character. Once the character has been created, you'll probably continue playing that character for many weeks, months, even years.

In our example, your character is standing on the lower steps to the basement. The sun is setting and a chilling laughter is bubbling up softly from below the very steps he (or she – the character) is standing on. Remember the scene, the setting? See how it all comes together?

## Imagine the Action

Actually, you need one more important ingredient to make a role-playing game work, the **Game Master**. The Game Master, or G.M., is another player (a real person) who controls and acts out all the characters in the game which are *not* the characters of other players. It is also the Game Master who, like the director of a film, establishes the setting, introduces antagonists and keeps the action moving. This means the Game Master plays/acts out the friendly police officer, the grumpy old man next-door, and the hideous thing under the stairs. In this written example, you are the only player and I am acting as the Game Master (G.M.) establishing the scene, setting and conflict.

The Game Master says to you: "You hear a hoarse, rasping laugh coming from below the very steps you are standing on. You realize that the steps are open, they don't have a back to them. They're like the steps of a ladder and whatever is below you can grab your ankles. What are *you* (your character) going to do?"

At this point, *you* must decide what your playing piece, your character, is going to do. Does he slowly bend down to see what's under the stairs? Does he try to run back up the stairs? Or maybe he leaps down the last few steps and tries to run to the pantry to bar the door and look for a weapon. Or, maybe, he screams like a girl and calls for help. These are just a few possible actions. The decision is *yours*. The Game Master will have the "thing under the stairs" (and all future encounters/opponents) *respond* to your character's actions.

*Like improvisational theater*, you, your fellow players and the Game Master, are all building an adventure, a story. The G.M. may have been the one to concoct the basic story, villains and plot twists, but even he doesn't know exactly how it will all turn out, because the players are the key components to the story. Their characters' choices and actions will change everything and carry the story along.

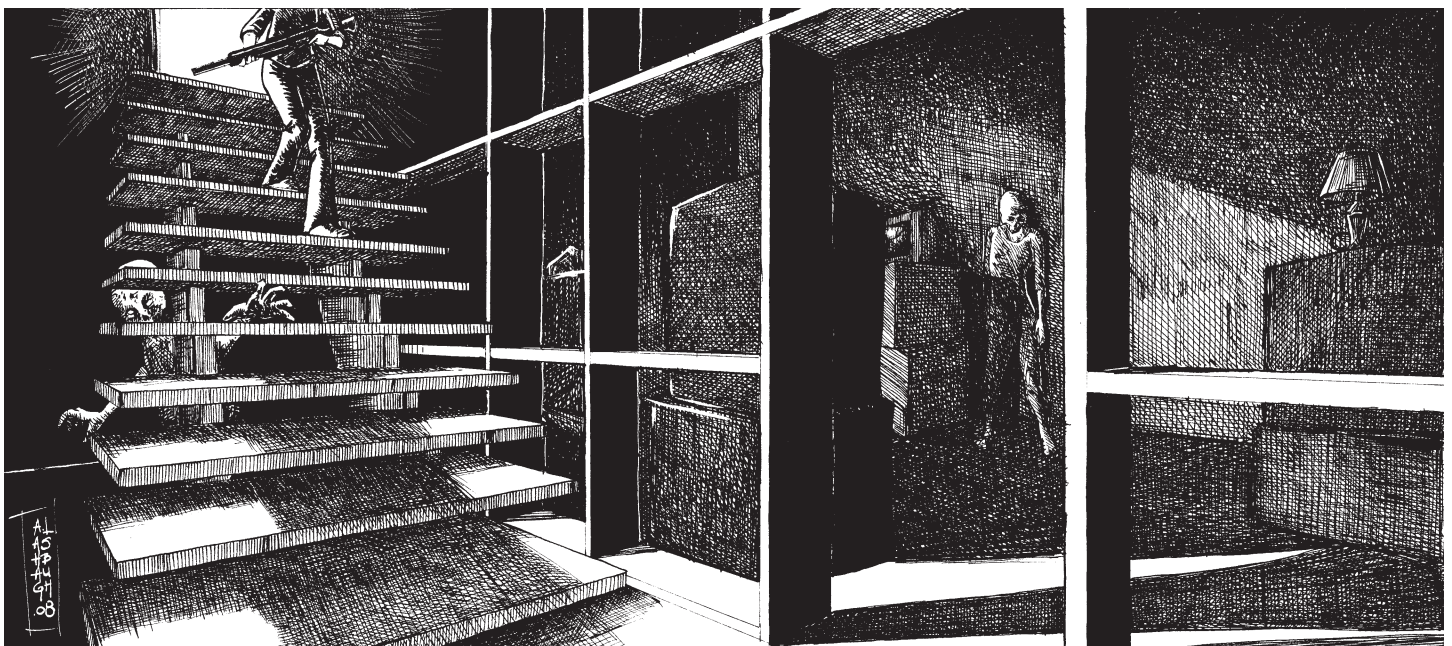
When the game is over you'll have a complete chapter of a larger story forever locked in your memory. A story that *you* helped to create and where your character was one of the heroes.

In a role-playing game there are no simple answers. There are also almost no limits to what you can do. The only restrictions are that you cannot go beyond the physical, mental and emotional limits of your character or the parameters of the setting.

## What You Need to Play

Other than imagination, two or more players (4-8 is common), and a Game Master, you also need the following:

**Dice:** 2 four-sided (2D4), 4 six-sided (4D6), 2 eight-sided (2D8), 2 ten-sided (2D10), and 2 twenty-sided (2D20). The numbers in parentheses are examples of how dice terms are condensed and written throughout this text. The first number "2" indicates the number of dice, the letter "D" stands for dice, and the second number indicates the type of dice, four-sided, six-sided, etc. The unusual types of dice, four, eight, ten and twenty sided dice (there are also 12-sided dice), can be purchased at most game and hobby shops, and gaming conventions, as well as online, but they can also be purchased at most "chain" bookstores like *Barnes & Noble*, *Waldenbooks*, *Borders*, and many comic book shops. Just ask a clerk where you'd find "dice for role-playing games." Ah, but to find an unimaginable array of dice, you'll have to check out a gaming convention. Going to Palladium Books' web site ([www.palladiumbooks.com](http://www.palladiumbooks.com)) will keep you abreast of conventions we are attending and how to find out more about them, and from there you will discover a larger world of gamers and gaming.



**Plenty of paper and a couple pens or pencils.** You need these items for keeping track of character stats like Hit Points and S.D.C., taking notes, keeping track of clues, sketching maps, and so on.

**Character log sheets** where you jot down your character's stats (attributes, skills, bonuses, weapons, etc.).

Oh, and of course you'll need a place for you and your friends to play. A bedroom, basement, family room, living room, kitchen, heck, just about any place will do the trick.



# Character Creation

Creating a character is simple and fun, though there will be a number of choices the player needs to consider, select, and make note of, which takes a bit of time.

The Palladium game system is built to maximize *characters* and *story* with the goal to create vivid, memorable characters with strong personalities and a range of skills, strengths and weaknesses, not a two-dimensional cartoon or videogame character. Consequently, it may take a player a while to build his character, but the end result will be a character that is uniquely *yours*. Designed to *your* specifications and unique to every other

character in the group. A character that, with a little development and personality, will seem to take on a life of its own. It's a magical and fun experience you'll never forget.

Let's take it one step at a time.

## Step One: The Eight Attributes

All characters have eight prime attributes, three mental and five physical. *Attribute numbers* are used to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of your character. **Note:** Attributes are also called "Statistics" or "Stats." The higher the number the better, smarter, faster, stronger, the character, but even low attributes can result in characters that are fun to play.

The first step in creating a character is to roll up the eight attributes: **I.Q.**, **M.E.**, **M.A.**, **P.S.**, **P.P.**, **P.E.**, **P.B.**, and **Spd.** These represent your character's natural mental and physical abilities. Some of the *Physical skills* and special bonuses or abilities from an O.C.C. may provide bonuses to increase some of the character's attributes, so it is important to write the numbers down in *pencil* until all modifiers and bonuses are accounted for.

**Three six-sided dice (3D6)** are rolled to determine each attribute. The higher the number, the greater the ability. Start with I.Q. and work your way through the rest.

**Exceptional right off the bat:** If an initial attribute roll using three six-side dice (3D6) adds up to a 16, 17, or 18, that attribute is considered *exceptional* and the player rolls *one additional six-sided die* (1D6), and that resulting number is added to the total for that attribute. If another six is rolled (a rarity), roll yet another 1D6 for that attribute! Stop there. No additional dice are rolled even if the second 1D6 bonus miraculously comes up a six. **Note:** This bonus 1D6 is only rolled during the *initial* attribute generation and does not apply to attributes raised to 16 or higher from skills, O.C.C.s, occupations, genetic augmentation, mutation or special abilities.

**Attribute Bonuses from Skills (Step 5):** Many of the *Physical skills* provide the character with *attribute bonuses* that help them in the performance of skills, combat and work. For example, Wrestling offers a +2 bonus to the P.S. and P.E. attributes, so if the player has already rolled a total of 15 for P.S., he adds another two points for a total of 17. If his P.E. was 8, the +2 would raise it to 10. All Physical skill point bonuses are cumulative.

## The Eight Attributes

**Intelligence Quotient (I.Q.):** Indicates the character's intelligence. The exact I.Q. is equal to the I.Q. attribute multiplied times ten. Characters with an I.Q. of 1-5 are not very bright, and should be played like the classic dumb lug. However, having a low I.Q. does not necessarily make the character a complete idiot. An I.Q. of 6-8 is slightly below average but far from an imbecile. An I.Q. of 9-12 is average, 13-15 slightly above average. An I.Q. of 16 or better is exceptional, the higher the number the more brilliant the character. An I.Q. of 16 or higher receives a one-time bonus (see Attribute Bonus Chart) to *all* skill percent-

## ATTRIBUTE BONUS CHART

	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
I.Q. add to all skills. This is a one time bonus.	+2%	+3%	+4%	+5%	+6%	+7%	+8%	+9%	+10%	+11%	+12%	+13%	+14%	+15%	+16%
M.E. save vs psionic attack	+1	+1	+2	+2	+3	+3	+4	+4	+5	+5	+6	+6	+7	+7	+8
save vs insanity	+1	+1	+2	+2	+3	+4	+5	+6	+7	+8	+9	+10	+11	+12	+13
M.A. trust/intimidate	40%	45%	50%	55%	60%	65%	70%	75%	80%	84%	88%	92%	94%	96%	97%
P.S. Hand to hand combat damage	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	+6	+7	+8	+9	+10	+11	+12	+13	+14	+15
P.P. parry, dodge and strike bonus	+1	+1	+2	+2	+3	+3	+4	+4	+5	+5	+6	+6	+7	+7	+8
P.E. save vs coma/death	+4%	+5%	+6%	+8%	+10%	+12%	+14%	+16%	+18%	+20%	+22%	+24%	+26%	+28%	+30%
save vs magic/poison	+1	+1	+2	+2	+3	+3	+4	+4	+5	+5	+6	+6	+7	+7	+8
P.B. charm/impress	30%	35%	40%	45%	50%	55%	60%	65%	70%	75%	80%	83%	86%	90%	92%

Spd No special bonuses other than the raw, natural ability to run.

ages, including Occupational and Elective Skills, Elective Skills that did not get a bonus and even Secondary Skills.

**Mental Endurance (M.E.):** Measures the amount of mental and emotional stress the character can withstand. M.E. 16 or better provides a bonus to save vs psionic attacks and insanity.

**Mental Affinity (M.A.):** Represents the character's likability, personal charm and charisma. Natural leaders, with an M.A. of 16 or higher, have a bonus to invoke trust or intimidation in others. A person with a high M.A. may appear trustworthy to some, but intimidating to others. This may depend on the character himself or the circumstances of the situation. At the player's option, a character with a high M.A. may choose to be only especially trustworthy or only intimidating. This explains how your friendly neighborhood ice cream man and some knife-wielding thug might both have the same high M.A., but use it differently.

**Physical Strength (P.S.):** This is the raw physical power of a character. Any character with a P.S. of 16 or better receives a bonus to damage an opponent in hand to hand combat. This bonus is applied to punch and kick attacks, as well as handheld weapons such as a club, knife or sword. It does not apply to the bow and arrow or guns.

**Physical Strength (P.S.) Beyond 30:** It's rare among human characters, but *zombies* (and other creatures) may have a P.S. greater than 30. The higher the number, the stronger the character, and the more damage done with his punches and physical attacks (as indicated in the standard table). Damage remains Hit Point/S.D.C. damage even if it is beyond P.S. 30 or 40.

**Damage Bonus Continues:** +1 point of Hit Point/S.D.C. damage per digit beyond 30. Thus a character with a P.S. of 31 does +16, P.S. 32 does +17, a P.S. of 40 does +25, and so on.

**Throwing Bonus:** For every five points above 30 (round down), the character can hurl a rock, ball or throwing weapon (dagger, spear, sling, etc.) or shoot an arrow an extra 30 feet (9.1 m) without losing accuracy (no penalties for the greater distance).

**Lifting and Carrying Bonus:** For every five points above 30 (round down), the strong character can lift or carry 30% more than usual.

**Note:** Other levels of strength from Augmented/Bionic and Robotic to Supernatural P.S. exist in many other Palladium RPGs, but do not apply to *Dead Reign*™.

**Physical Prowess (P.P.):** Shows the degree of dexterity and agility of the character. A P.P. of 16 or higher is rewarded with bonuses to strike, parry and dodge.

**Physical Endurance (P.E.):** Demonstrates the character's stamina and durability. The amount of physical punishment and resistance to fatigue, disease, and poison (and magic too) are determined by P.E. Characters with a P.E. of 16 or higher receive a bonus to save vs coma/death, disease, poisons/toxins, and magic. But not Demonic Curses or possession, they are different and separate.

**Physical Beauty (P.B.):** An indication of the physical attractiveness of the character. A P.B. of 16 or better is rewarded with a bonus to charm or impress.

**Speed (Spd):** This is how fast the character can run. The character's Speed x20 is the number of yards or meters he can run in one minute. Speed x5 is the number of yards/meters covered in a melee round (15 seconds). Dividing the distance covered in a melee round by the character's number of attacks indicates how far he can move on each attack.

## SPEED CHART

The following is a simple conversion table of Speed factors into approximate miles per hour (mph) and kilometer equivalents.

Speed	approx. mph	km per hour
5	3½	5.6
11	7½	12
22	15	24
27	18½	29.7
33	22½	36
44	30	48
50	35	56
55	37½	60
58	40	64
66	45	72
77	53	85
88	60	96
110	75	120
132	90	144
220	150	240
293	200	320

**A note about bonuses:** Many skills and abilities provide characters with bonuses to strike, parry, dodge, save, etc. These bonuses are typically added to a particular combat or melee *action*. Always be sure to include your character's bonuses, since they may make the difference between success and failure, life and death.

## Weight & Movement

Normal characters, with a P.S. of 3 to 16, can carry 10 times their P.S. in pounds (P.S.x10 = total in pounds). For Example: A character with a P.S. of 9 can carry 90 pounds (40.5 kg). A character with a P.S. of 15 can carry 150 pounds (67.5 kg).

Strong characters, with a P.S. of 17 or higher, can carry 20 times their P.S. in pounds. This means a character with a P.S. of 18 can carry 360 pounds (162 kg).

**Lifting weight** is a little different than carrying weight. You may have noticed, yourself, that you can usually lift up a heavier amount than you can carry. I'm not talking about weightlifting in a body building sense, nor lifting a heavy weight above the chest. Simply the ability to bend over and lift something that weighs more than you can carry. The simple rule is that a character can lift TWICE as much as he/she could carry. This means that the character with a P.S. of 9 can carry 90 pounds (40.5 kg), but can lift 180 pounds (81 kg).

**Throwing Heavy or Awkward Objects:** A character can not throw more than he can carry.

Add one foot (0.3 m) to the effective range for every P.S. point listed; e.g., P.S. 24 add 24 feet (7.3 m).

Objects such as bricks, bottles, and swords are not designed for throwing. Consequently, the effective range is limited regardless of the strength behind it.

Darts, knives and throwing axes are designed for throwing, but don't have the weight or balance for great distances. The same is true of most objects weighing less than half a pound. Javelins, more so than spears, are designed for distance throwing.

Miscellaneous items weighing over a pound (0.45 kg) and less than 10 pounds (4.5 kg), such as chairs, stools, or lanterns, can be thrown about *half* as far as the one pound (0.45 kg) object.

**Normal and extraordinarily strong characters** can hurl a weight equal to the weight they can carry, four inches per each P.S. point. This means the person with a P.S. 9 can toss 90 lbs (40.5 kg) up to 3 feet (0.9 m) away. The hero with a P.S. of 17 can toss 340 lbs (153 kg) up to 5 feet, 8 inches away (1.7 m).

## Step Two:

### Understanding Damage Ratings

#### Armor Rating

**Artificial armor**, such as bulletproof vests, suits of armor like the knights of old, reinforced doors and anything that has been armored, also has an *Armor Rating (A.R.)* as well as S.D.C. The Armor Rating indicates exactly how much protection is afforded by the *armor* (or object) and how easy it is to penetrate the armored protection. The higher the A.R., the better.

If an attack roll to strike with all bonuses is *less than* the A.R. of the armor or object (door, shield, etc.), the armor absorbs the attack – subtract the damage from the armor's S.D.C.

**When the armor's S.D.C. is depleted**, it no longer affords protection and is useless. Any future attacks will hit the charac-

ter's body and inflict *Physical S.D.C.* and then *Hit Point* damage.

If an attacker's roll to strike, including all bonuses, is *higher than* the A.R., the attack penetrates the armor and inflicts damage directly to the character's S.D.C. and/or Hit Points.

**The defender always wins ties**, so if the roll to strike is 16 against somebody with body armor that has an A.R. 16, the attack hits the character, but only damages the body armor because it didn't *surpass* the A.R. protection. However, if that strike roll had been 17 or higher, the attack would have struck an area not covered by the armor or punched right through it, doing damage to the character underneath it.

**Natural Armor Rating of Zombies:** Zombies are more than human and have what is known as a *Natural Armor Rating*.

A Natural Armor Rating means a roll to strike that falls *under* the Natural A.R. may indeed hit, but inflicts *no damage*. Punches and bullets bounce off, or go right through, harmlessly. The monster barely feels a thing, and combat continues.

A roll *above* the Natural A.R. strikes and inflicts *full damage*, first to the physical S.D.C. and, once the S.D.C. is depleted, then to the creature's Hit Points.

**Zombies are unique and deadly.** First, many normal weapons do NOT hurt or damage zombies, or they inflict a fraction of their usual damage. That include bullets, arrows, punches and attacks to the zombie's body and limbs.

Depleting the Hit Points of a zombie will take it out of action for an hour and give characters a chance to escape or take additional action to insure it is destroyed, but zombies regenerate and will walk again unless the head is decapitated or the zombie's brains are destroyed.

See the zombie section, *Secrets of the Dead*, for complete details on killing the walking dead and all thier abilities, but beating the A.R. 14 is the first obstacle in battling zombies.



## S.D.C. & Hit Points

Characters have two damage values, *Hit Points* and *S.D.C.* Here's how they work.

**S.D.C. for People (or Physical S.D.C.).** S.D.C. is designed to indicate damage to the physical body that hurts, but is not life threatening. This is the classic movie device of the “flesh wound” and “barroom brawl” where the hero gets shot, stabbed or takes a beating, but, except for a trickle of blood and some bruises, is basically *okay*. This is actually realistic when you think about professional athletes, especially boxers, hockey and football players. Football players, for example, are “gridiron warriors” who get hit, knocked down, tackled, crunched and battered without (for the most part) life threatening injury. They hurt and ache, but they are far from seriously injured and can, with some pain, continue to “play” with negligible impairment or apparent discomfort. That's S.D.C. in a nutshell.

**Initial damage** inflicted on a character is S.D.C. damage. S.D.C. damage has little or no bleeding and no internal injury or serious physical damage. Any bleeding there may be is minimal, does not count toward blood loss and stops within 1D4 melee rounds (15-60 seconds). “Don't worry, it's only a scratch.”

Game Masters, please use common sense with S.D.C. and Hit Points. Some situations – like diving on top of a grenade, getting shot in the head at point-blank range, falling from a great height such as 1,000 feet/305 m – will do damage “directly to Hit Points,” skipping S.D.C. entirely.

**Determining Physical S.D.C.:** All O.C.C.s (Occupational Character Classes) get 1D10+12 S.D.C. to start. Some O.C.C.s/Occupations may offer an S.D.C. bonus, plus many Physical skills provide an S.D.C. bonus. All S.D.C. bonuses are accumulative, add them up to get the total S.D.C. of a given character.

### Hit Points

**Hit Point damage** is serious and potentially life threatening damage. In most cases, however, even Hit Point damage requires multiple injuries or sustained damage to become truly life threatening. The lower a character's Hit Points drop, the closer to death he is getting!

Hit Points might best be thought of as *life points* because they indicate how much physical damage (cuts, bruises, etc.) a character can withstand before he or she dies. Damage is subtracted from *Hit Points* when all *Physical S.D.C.* points are gone or when an attack states “damage is direct to Hit Points.”

Each time a character is struck by a punch, kick, weapon, bullet or energy blast, he takes physical damage. Each individual player keeps score of how many Hit Points his character has by subtracting the damage from his character's Hit Points each time that character is hit and injured/takes damage (and remember that's typically after all S.D.C. are gone). The G.M. does the same thing, keeping score of how much damage the player characters have inflicted upon monsters, opponents and NPCs.

When a character has *zero* Hit Points, he collapses and falls into a coma and will soon die without extensive medical help. When a character's Hit Points have been knocked far below zero, he is dead and beyond saving. Most characters can survive a number equal to the P.E. attribute number (i.e., P.E. 8, the

character is comatose and may be saved as long as he is not more than -8 below zero).

### Determining Hit Points

**Base Hit Points:** Having rolled up your eight attributes, you will recall that one of them is *Physical Endurance (P.E.)*. The Physical Endurance score indicates your character's base/starting amount of Hit Points. A P.E. of 8 means eight Hit Points, a P.E. of 14 means fourteen Hit Points. Then roll 1D6 and *add it* to the Hit Point total. This is a first level character's *starting Hit Points*.

Some of you may have a character with a large number of Hit Points, but don't get cocky. Gunfire, multiple knife wounds and a sound beating can whittle the character down to size in a melee round or two. To those who find themselves with a character who has only a handful of Hit Points, don't despair or feel cheated. You'll just have to use cleverness and cunning to avoid serious confrontations until you've built up your Hit Points.

**Building Hit Points:** Add another 1D6 Hit Points for each new experience level of advancement starting at level two. The more experienced and hardened the character becomes, the more damage he can endure. And don't forget about Physical S.D.C., and take a look at body armor and Armor Ratings (A.R.); more on them in a minute.

### S.D.C. for Objects

#### Structural Damage Capacity

There are two types of S.D.C. The first is Physical S.D.C. and applies to all living creatures, and is a sort of supplement to Hit Points. The second type of S.D.C. applies to inanimate, non-living structures.

**S.D.C. Type Two: Objects:** Inanimate objects, such as the walls of buildings, vehicles, furniture, body armor, and so on, also have S.D.C. In this case, the S.D.C. indicates the total amount of damage that the object can withstand. These S.D.C. points function exactly like Hit Points, except that they apply to non-living things. Any damage sustained by, say, a door someone is trying to kick in, is subtracted from the S.D.C. of that item, in this case a door. When the S.D.C. is reduced to zero, it is broken, shattered or smashed beyond repair.

**G.M. Note:** The S.D.C. system just described is a standard rule in most Palladium Books games. From time to time we hear a complaint that goes something like, “How can somebody be bashing or shooting into a door and the door is in perfect condition until all of its S.D.C. is depleted?”

The answer is, it is *not* in perfect condition. Using the example of the door, the G.M. should explain exactly what's happening. “You bash into the door with your shoulder. It's a very solid door and you inflict minimal damage (give S.D.C. damage). You realize that it will take quite a while to gain entry this way and you may hurt yourself in the process.” Or, “You can feel the door give a little under your great strength (give S.D.C. damage). Another bash and the door's frame cracks and moans, but it still holds (give S.D.C. damage). It will take another couple of attempts as the door's S.D.C. dwindles, but it's definitely giving.” Or, “Your submachine-gun riddles the wood door with a dozen holes.” Something the player can look through, but the door is still locked and holding strong.

The point is, attacks on normal objects will scrape, dent, crack, snap, break, splinter, crumble, punch holes through, and so on, even if the object is not completely destroyed. To smash or destroy something may require multiple attacks, and in some cases, like being locked behind an iron door or bulkhead, it may be *impossible* to damage the item at all.

## Recovery from Physical Injury

### Restoring Hit Points and S.D.C.

After a battle, human characters who have sustained physical damage must tend to their wounds. The attending of wounds can be administered by fellow characters with First Aid, Paramedic and other medical skills, trained medical personnel, or by oneself provided the character has the appropriate medical skill and is not so injured as to be physically impaired.

**First Aid and other medical skills** include basic and immediate treatment such as cleaning and bandaging wounds, stopping bleeding and so on, which will prevent further blood loss until the character can receive better medical care. This is fine for minor wounds, but serious injuries, like internal bleeding and broken bones, will require professional treatment. **Note:** Unless a character stops the bleeding of cuts and stab wounds, he will continue to lose blood and suffer damage at the rate of one Hit Point per minute. See more on blood loss under *Blood Loss Damage*, described below. When all Hit Points are reduced to zero, the character falls into a coma and hovers near death.

**Recovery: Non-Professional Treatment.** This is basic, first aid-type treatment by oneself, or non-medically trained people. This type of treatment may be used if the character is not able to seek professional treatment immediately. It is not necessarily inferior treatment, especially for not too serious of an ailment, but just lacks the full facilities and experience of a major medical institution. **Rate of Recovery:** Two Hit Points per day (24 hours) and/or four S.D.C. per day.

**Recovery: Professional Treatment.** This is medical treatment from a doctor, clinic or hospital. **Rate of Recovery:** Two Hit Points per day for the first two days and four per each following day, until the character has regained all of his/her original Hit Points. S.D.C. points are restored at a rate of six per day.

### Surviving Coma and Death

When a character's Hit Points are reduced to zero (or less), he collapses and falls into a coma. How much damage below zero a character can withstand is determined by the Physical Endurance (P.E.) attribute. A character can take one point of damage below zero (to negative one, -2, -3, etc.) for each P.E. point. **Example:** A character with a P.E. of 9 will lapse into a coma at zero Hit Points, but still lives up to a negative 9. However, if the character receives more damage (which is very possible) than the P.E., he is dead with no hope of recovery. Thus, if a character with a P.E. of 9 takes 10 points or more below zero, exceeding his P.E., he is beyond medical help and dies. Note that some special abilities may extend the amount of damage below zero a character can endure, and in some cases, continue to function.

The length of time a character in a coma will survive without treatment is again indicated by the P.E. Add one hour for each P.E. point. **Example:** P.E. 9 = 9 hours, P.E. 10 = 10 hours, and so on.

Whether a character survives the coma and is stabilized (brought back to at least one Hit Point above zero), is determined by the roll of percentile dice. If the player rolls two successful recovery rolls out of three, the character breaks out of the coma and is no longer in danger of dying. This also means that he is brought up to one Hit Point above zero. Recovery of Hit Points from that time on is standard; see *Recovery of Hit Points*, above. **Note:** This can be attempted every hour until the character dies.

### Recovery Ratio (roll 2 out of 3)

Treatment from unprofessional individuals with medical skills: 01-18%

Treatment from an intern or nurse (R.N.): 01-32%

Treatment from a doctor without proper facilities: 01-46%

Treatment from a doctor at a clinic (fair facilities): 01-56%

Treatment from a hospital: 01-66%

Treatment from a major, large hospital: 01-70%

### Blood Loss Damage (Optional)

To keep the game fast and simple, we assume even Hit Point damage (unless severe) is not necessarily an immediate life and death situation. Most characters can take one to ten Hit Points of damage like falling off a log. They'll need some painkillers and to get bandaged up, but they'll be just fine with a little rest and medicine.

HOWEVER, when a character loses half or more of his Hit Point number, he is badly hurt. This is when Blood Loss rules kick in. Not only has the character taken a physical pounding, but he is also bleeding from one or more wounds or suffering from internal bleeding. This bleeding causes an additional *one point* of H.P. damage per minute (every four melee rounds), and can result in death! Thankfully, immediate and dramatic medical attention (blood transfusion, surgery, suturing of wounds, etc.) can rescue and revive a character who has fallen into a coma resulting from blood loss (and other injuries). Remember, a character lapses into a coma when his Hit Points are reduced to zero or fall below zero.

**Warning!** Unless given at least First Aid treatment and bandaged to stop the worst of the bleeding, the comatose character will continue to lose one Hit Point per minute and could "bleed out" – fall below the P.E. margin for resuscitation and coma recovery. **Designer's Note:** Using the Blood Loss rule can add a tremendous amount of tension and urgency in getting a fallen comrade to a hospital, as well as make players handle their characters more carefully so they don't die. Try it, it may add a new dimension and level of fear to the game. ("Stop arguing and give the damn thing what it wants! We have to get Fred to a doctor or he's gonna die!") It also makes Doctors and other healers important teammates or NPC characters.

## Step Three:

### Choosing an Occupation & Skills

The Occupational Character Class (O.C.C.) determines the skills, work, orientation, purpose, and equipment for your character. Players should skim over the O.C.C. descriptions and

range of available skills, equipment and purpose, and *select* the one they find most interesting, challenging or appealing. I have tried to make them all unique and fun, each with its own distinctive background, goals and flavor. Even the Survivor O.C.C. characters are heroic and interesting. Enjoy.

### Common O.C.C. Description Terms:

**Requirements:** Some O.C.C.s and future character classes may have required minimum attributes or a specific background, but most do not. To take that O.C.C., the character must meet the necessary requirements. If the player is dead set on a particular character and is off only one point or two, the Game Master should allow the player to bump that attribute up to the *minimum* requirement to select it.

**Alignments:** All characters must select an alignment. This is the character's moral template and conscience.

**Attribute Bonuses:** Some O.C.C.s get an attribute bonus of one kind or another.

**O.C.C. Bonuses:** These are other bonuses reflecting the strengths (or weaknesses) of that O.C.C. They include what the character needs to roll to save vs psionic attack as well as bonuses to combat moves (strike, parry, dodge, etc.), Perception Rolls and saving throws.

**P.P.E.:** All living beings possess P.P.E. (Potential Psychic Energy). Characters with high P.P.E. are most sought after by zombies as food and death cultists for ritual human sacrifice!

**O.C.C. Skills:** The primary skills related to the occupation. Each occupation provides a different range of skills and the number of Elective and Secondary Skills that can be selected.

**Elective Skills:** Additional areas of knowledge that may or may not relate to the occupation.

**Secondary Skills:** Additional skills learned on one's own.

**Skill Bonuses:** The number in parentheses such as Swim (+10%).

**Standard Equipment:** Typical gear for a character of his or her background and occupation.

**Pay:** Varies with one's chosen occupation.

**Level Advancement/Experience:** As a character grows in level of experience, so do the levels of his skills and abilities. See the *Experience System* section for details.

**Multiple Character Classes** or dual O.C.C.s are not an option.

## Step Four:

### Picking an Alignment

All players *must* choose an alignment for their character. This defines a character's attitudes and provides a moral center. There are three basic alignment categories: *Good*, *Selfish* and *Evil*.

Alignments play a vital role in developing a character's personality and are a key element of "role" playing. Whether we are consciously aware of it or not, every person has his or her own moral compass to guide him. Whether one calls it a code of ethics and morals, or justice and honor, or religious values, alignments define what the character sees as right and wrong,

good and evil, acceptable behavior and what is not acceptable. It is this sense of right and wrong that helps build moral fiber, mold one's behavior, and dictate how a character treats others and how he should react when faced with a moral choice.

Alignments should be seen as a *guideline* for each character that indicates how he or she is likely to react to any given situation. Try to have your character stay true to his alignment and act accordingly, even if it goes against the grain. In fact, battling to stay true to one's alignment replicates the conscience and realistic moral dilemmas, i.e., being emotionally torn to do the right thing, or what feels good at the moment. An act of cruelty out of revenge or hate, for example, might sound good in the heat of the moment, but is not the good or right thing to do. A player struggling with such a decision for his character emulates that emotional gut process.

When a player finds himself slipping (or slipped) out of character, the Game Master (G.M.) should stop the game for a moment and, as the referee/director of the story, point out that the player's intended actions *go against his alignment*. The G.M. should then warn that moving forward with that choice may cause the character to *change alignment*. For example: A Principled good character that acts out of hatred and deliberately tortures another being is likely to drop to the *Anarchist* or even *Miscreant evil* alignment depending on how cruel and vicious the act was, or how much the character enjoyed it. Similarly, a





Principled character who decides to steal or “bend” the law is likely to drop to a *Scrupulous* or *Unprincipled* alignment, and to *Anarchist* if he keeps stealing or breaking the law. Everyone makes a mistake from time to time, but repeated drops from alignment and/or no remorse for a wrongdoing will definitely cause a quick change. Likewise, a *Miscreant* evil character who has learned the value of friendship and begins to act kind, noble and compassionate, or forsakes his villainous ways, may go up to *Anarchist* or *Unprincipled*, and eventually, even higher if he keeps it up. However, achieving a better, higher moral alignment should be much, much more difficult to achieve than the quick plummet into a bad or self-serving alignment.

Playing in character (e.g., in alignment) can be a challenge, but it is always fun and worth doing.

## No Neutral Alignments

There is no such thing as an absolute neutral alignment. A character with an absolute, true neutral position could not make a decision, fight tyranny, hurt others, go adventuring, or take any action of any kind without leaning toward good, evil, or self-gratification. It is humanly impossible, and therefore is eliminated in the context of this game.

There are some philosophers out there who might disagree with this, but that’s a topic for another forum and not a factor of this game. Sorry, this is one of the very few definitive, unbending rules.

## Good Alignments

Good aligned characters (*Principled* and *Scrupulous*) are the straight-up heroes of this world. They generally place a high value on life and liberty, as well as law and order. Just because a character is of a good alignment, however, does not mean he’s a saint or without bad habits. Good characters can be irritating, obnoxious and arrogant, even prejudiced and full of annoying quirks. Likewise, they may find themselves stepping outside the boundaries of the law in their quest to combat evil and injustice, but when push comes to shove, these characters can *always* be trusted to do the right thing, especially in a life and death situation.

### Principled (Good)

Principled characters are upright “boy scout” or “do-gooder” types who put others before themselves. This is the knight in shining armor, with the highest regard for the lives and well-being of others, freedom, truth, honor and justice. Principled characters will always *attempt* to work with and within the law, and have a high regard for (and trust of) authority, as well as for life and freedom. They are usually compassionate, merciful, cooperative and sincere.

#### A Principled character will . . .

1. Always keep his word.
2. Avoid lies.
3. Never kill or attack an unarmed foe.
4. Never harm an innocent.
5. Never torture for any reason.
6. Never kill for pleasure.
7. Always help others.

8. Always work within the law whenever possible.

9. Never break the law unless conditions are desperate. This means no breaking and entering, theft, torture, unprovoked assaults, etc.

10. Respect authority, law, self-discipline and honor.

11. Work well in a group.

12. Never take “dirty” money, or ill-gotten valuables or goods. This means any property that belongs to criminals or villains. It matters not how the bad guys got that property themselves; the hero will not touch it even if destitute.

13. Never betray a friend.

### Scrupulous (Good)

Scrupulous characters value life and freedom above all else and despise those who would deprive others of them. This type of hero is typically portrayed in many movies as the cop who plays by his own rules, forced to work beyond the law for justice (or retribution) and the greater good of the people. They are not vicious or vindictive characters, but are individuals driven by their sense of justice to right a wrong or take a (bloody) stand. These characters will always attempt to work with or within the law whenever possible.

#### A Scrupulous character will . . .

1. Keep his word to any other good person.
2. Lie only to people of selfish or evil alignments.
3. Never attack or kill an unarmed foe.
4. Never harm an innocent.
5. Never torture for pleasure, but may use muscle to extract information from criminals or evil characters.
6. Never kill for pleasure, will always attempt to bring the villain to justice alive, no matter how vile he may find him.
7. Always try to help others.
8. Attempt to work within the law whenever possible.
9. Bend and, occasionally, break the law when deemed necessary. This means he may use strong-arm techniques, harass, break and enter, steal, and so on (but only against the bad guys).
10. Distrust authority; fears the law and government may not be an effective weapon against injustice and crime. However, he will try not to flagrantly disregard the law.
11. Work with groups, but dislike confining laws and bureaucracy (red tape).
12. Never take “dirty” money or items.
13. Never betray a friend.

## Selfish Alignments

Selfish characters (*Unprincipled* and *Anarchist*) are not necessarily evil, but they always have their own best interests at heart and their opinions in mind above all others. These are the mercenaries, rogues, vigilantes and anti-heroes of the world.

### Unprincipled (Selfish)

This basically good person tends to be selfish and greedy, and holds his personal freedom and welfare above almost everything else. He dislikes confining laws and self-discipline and distrusts authority. He views the law and government as well in-

tentioned, but clumsy and ineffective. Keeping his best interests in mind, the character will always look out for himself.

This character is also likely to take “dirty” money and items, with the concept that it will help him in his crusade against evil. He may also destroy the property of known criminals. He will not deal in illegal wares or drugs, or take money from innocent or good people. The Unprincipled character may associate with both good and evil characters, and often has paid informants, spies and stoolies.

This is the noble scoundrel, the guy who is always looking for the best deal, associates with good and evil characters, is continually tempted to lie and cheat, and hates himself for being loyal, helping others and ultimately doing the “right thing.”

#### **An Unprincipled character will . . .**

1. Keep his word of honor.
2. Lie and cheat if necessary (especially to those of Anarchist and evil alignments).
3. Not kill an unarmed foe (but will take advantage of one).
4. Never harm an innocent.
5. Not use torture unless absolutely necessary.
6. Never kill for pleasure; will *attempt* to bring the villain to justice alive and ruin him rather than simply kill him.
7. Usually help those in need.
8. Rarely attempt to work within the law.
9. Blatantly break the law to achieve his (usually good-intentioned) goals.
10. Dislike and distrust authority, the law and bureaucracy. Feels they have been corrupted and abused.
11. Work with groups, especially if it serves his needs, is profitable, and/or he is in the limelight.
12. Take “dirty” money.
13. Never betray a friend.
14. Have a high regard for life and freedom.

#### **Anarchist (Selfish)**

This type of character likes to indulge himself in everything. He is the insurgent, con-artist, gambler and uncommitted free-booter who adventures because he enjoys the thrill, fame and fortune it brings, rather than for any cause (like defending humanity). This character will at least *consider* doing anything if the price is right or the challenge is alluring enough.

Laws and rules infringe on personal freedom and were meant to be broken. He will not hesitate at using strong-arm techniques, breaking and entering, theft, harassment, destruction of private property, and so on. This can also include acting as judge, jury, and executioner. These characters are usually the daring anti-heroes who feel the end justifies the means. The Anarchist-aligned person is always looking for the best deal and self-gratification. He will work with good, selfish and evil characters to attain his goals. The Anarchist is continually teetering between good and evil, rebelling against and bending the law to fit *his* needs. Mercenaries and thieves often fall into this category.

#### **An Anarchist character will . . .**

1. Keep his word, but only if it suits or pleases him.
2. Lie and cheat if he feels it necessary.

3. Not be likely to kill an unarmed foe, but certainly will knock out, attack or beat up one.

4. Never kill an innocent, although his rash or self-serving actions may injure or kill bystanders by accident.

5. Use torture to extract information, but is not likely to do so for pleasure.

6. Seldom kill for pleasure.

7. Not be likely to help someone without some ulterior motive (even if it’s only to show off).

8. Rarely work within the law unless it serves his purpose.

9. Constantly break the law to achieve his goals.

10. Have little respect for authority, the law, or self-discipline.

11. Not work well within groups; tends to do as he pleases, despite orders to the contrary.

12. Take “dirty” money without hesitation.

13. Possibly betray a friend. Sorry, pal.

## **Evil Alignments**

All evil characters (*Aberrant*, *Miscreant* and *Diabolic*) are not necessarily bent on universal genocide or dominating all other living creatures. Nor are all evil characters sadistic, cruel, ugly or untrustworthy. Many evil characters may actually seem kind or likeable.

Evil alignments are a step beyond the self-gratification of the selfish alignments. Evil characters are ruthless individuals who are willing to say or do anything to achieve their goals. Most commonly, evil characters have goals that either entail making people suffer or cause suffering as a side effect (a side effect the evil character knowingly and callously disregards). Human life has little meaning to them, and friends tend to be (but not always) people to use and discard when they are no longer of value. Evil aligned characters do not automatically slay any good-aligned person because of different ethics and philosophy. All the better to use good to achieve their own goals, for the end always justifies the means.

**Note:** There is nothing wrong with *playing* a fictional, evil character, although he may not survive too long if he betrays or harms too many people, nor is the character likely to be trusted or liked by his “good” teammates. However, this is role-playing, not reality, so you can play any type of character you might desire, just continue to play “in character”. That having been said, player characters in **Dead Reign™** tend to be – or strive to be – brave, noble and heroic.

#### **Aberrant (Evil)**

The cliché that there is “no honor among thieves” is false when dealing with the Aberrant character. This is an individual who is driven to attain his goals through force, power, and intimidation. Yet the Aberrant character stands apart from the norm with his own personal (and twisted) code of ethics. He expects loyalty from his minions, punishing disloyalty and treachery with a swift, merciful death or banishment. An Aberrant character will always keep his word of honor and uphold any bargains. He will define his terms and live by them, whether anyone else likes them or not.

If an anti-hero, he will completely disregard the law and deal out justice as he deems fit. He will never be cruel or vindictive, and will always be absolutely positive that the person is guilty before he deals out his brand of justice. However, once he condemns a character, he will see to it that he is destroyed.

Whether a villain or a corrupt or extreme anti-hero, the Aberrant character looks upon people without honor or a sense of loyalty as worthless and disgusting lowlifes.

Do not think of the Aberrant character as a misguided good guy. He or she will break all laws with impunity, harass victims, destroy property, assault, blackmail, torture and murder. Only their methods and degree of violence may vary.

#### **An Aberrant character will . . .**

1. Always keep his word of honor (at least to those he deems worthy of it).
2. Lie and cheat to those not worthy of his respect; good, selfish or evil.
3. May or may not kill an unarmed foe.
4. Never kill an innocent, particularly a child, but may harm, harass or kidnap.
5. Never torture for pleasure, but will use it to extract information and intimidate others.
6. Never kill for pleasure, will always have a reason.
7. Possibly help someone in need.
8. Rarely attempt to work within the law.
9. Break the law without hesitation.
10. Have no use for the law or bureaucracy, but respects honor, self-discipline and the "concept" of laws and order.
11. Work with others to attain his goals.
12. Usually take "dirty" money, although his twisted code of ethics may prevent him from doing so in some instances.
13. Never betray a friend. Never.

#### **Miscreant (Evil)**

This self-serving, unscrupulous character is out only for himself. Power, glory, wealth, position, and anything that will make his life more comfortable or pleasurable is his goal. It doesn't matter who gets caught in the middle, as long as he comes out smelling like a rose. The character will lie, cheat, hurt, and kill anyone to attain his personal goals.

If a Miscreant character becomes a vigilante, mercenary, or bounty hunter, it will be for some personal reason, a vendetta, money, glory or a love for danger and challenge. This character is a savage misanthrope out for himself.

#### **A Miscreant character will . . .**

1. Not necessarily keep his word to anyone.
2. Lie and cheat indiscriminately (good, evil, selfish).
3. Kill an unarmed foe as readily as he would a potential threat or competition.
4. Use or harm an innocent.
5. Use torture for extracting information and pleasure.
6. Possibly kill for sheer pleasure.
7. Feel no compulsion to help without some sort of tangible reward for him.

8. Have no deference to the law, but will work within the law if he must.
9. Blatantly break the law for his own goals and pleasure.
10. Dislike and distrust authority and the law.
11. Work with others if it will help him attain his personal goals.
12. Take "dirty" money, stolen goods, and illegal items (as well as steal valuables for himself whenever the opportunity arises).
13. Betray a friend if it serves his needs.
14. Have no respect or concern for the lives or welfare of others.

#### **Diabolic (Evil)**

This is the category that most megalomaniacs, psychopaths, and violent and despicable characters fall into. This is the cruel, brutal killer who trusts no one and has no value for any life other than his own. A Diabolic character will crush anyone who gets in his way. The lowlife will lie, cheat, con, abuse and kill anyone less powerful than he is. Aberrant characters find these dishonorable people more revolting than a good aligned character.

#### **A Diabolic character will . . .**

1. Rarely keep his word, and has no honor.
2. Lie to and cheat anyone.
3. Most certainly attack and kill an unarmed foe.
4. Hurt and kill an innocent without a second thought and for pleasure.
5. Use torture for pleasure and information, regularly.
6. Kill for sheer pleasure.
7. Be likely to help someone only on a whim (or to set them up for some evil deed later).



8. Rarely attempt to work within the law.
9. Blatantly break the law and mock authority.
10. Despise honor, authority and self-discipline. Views them as weaknesses.
11. Not work well within a group; constantly disregarding orders and vying for power/command.
12. Always take “dirty” money, drugs, stolen goods, etc., as well as steal from others.
13. Betray a friend without hesitation; after all, you can always find new friends.
14. Associate mostly with other evil alignments.

## Step Five

### Character Advancement

## The Experience Level System

**Game Designer Notes:** As mentioned earlier in this book, every component of the Palladium game system has been carefully thought out, play tested and fine tuned for years and years. The choice of a level based method for character advancement is no exception. Behind the scenes, we’ve discussed, experimented with, and considered other approaches.

The Palladium Megaversal Game System uses *Experience Levels* as a means of character growth and advancement because I feel it is best suited for role-playing games that focus on *characters* and *story*. It feels right, plays out nicely, simulates real life, and develops the characters in such a way that they become more vivid and three dimensional.

**The Experience Level approach** is intended for a long-term campaign (an anticipation of playing on a regular basis for months or even years), and on the premise that ALL characters *start* at level one. This is not an absolute (very little about role-playing is written in stone), but starting at level one means the characters all start out on par with one another and *grow* in experience, knowledge and ability as they experience life and survive adventures.

I’d like to use a comic book analogy if I may. Using a level system and starting at First Level is the difference between playing the comic book and film character, **Batman**, as he is today with years of experience, the Batcave, Batmobile, and other gadgets at his disposal, Robin, Nightwing and a host of agents, contacts and friends, seasoned ability and confidence under his utility belt; and playing **Batman: Year One**. Staying with this analogy, **Batman: Year One** is the Dark Knight at First Level. He is done with all his training and preparations, and is just launching his career as a crime fighting vigilante. There is no Batcave or Robin, and the great Batman isn’t so grand. His skills and abilities are not yet fully developed and he lacks the experience of a polished veteran. He’s flying by the seat of his pants, figuring things out and making things up as he goes along. He has goals, dreams and desires, but doesn’t know exactly what he’s doing, how to handle every situation, or even if he’s going about everything the right way. It’s a strange, new world for the character in year one. He’s the *new kid* on the block.

Not only is this *learning curve* fun to play, but starting at level one and growing a character through experience (i.e., watching your character grow by trial and tribulation through real experience) makes the character that much richer with a background, skills, abilities and experience that have been *earned*. There is real continuity (“Hey guys, wait a minute. Remember when we battled X?”) and a sense of accomplishment. The character (and the player) is more mature, knowledgeable and has a greater sense of purpose and confidence rooted in experience. That, my dear readers, is a superior, vivid character, and that’s what the Experience Level approach establishes and promotes, in my opinion, better than any other.

I also like it because I believe an *Experience Level System* of character advancement simulates real life. I don’t care how much schooling and education a person gets, or how much time a person logs on a computer or playing through controlled simulations, *none of it* is a substitute for real life experience. (Or in this case, real fictional adventuring and game play.) Furthermore, a person just gets better in many things with age and experience. Look at sports and almost any skilled profession. Those dedicated to learning and improving do get better. I know art and writing best, so I’ll use my personal experiences as an example. As of the year 2008, I’m 52 years old and I’ve been writing and designing games professionally for 27 years. I started Palladium at the age of 24 armed with a dream, determination, a gazillion ideas, unbridled enthusiasm and raw talent. If you had asked me then, I would have told you I was a good writer and concept man, and a Jack of Many Trades who was writing at his best. All true. However, looking back at much of my early work makes me cringe. It *was* the best I could do – at the time. I was proud of it then, and I created one good selling role-playing game world after another, even a few mega-hits. However, looking back at my work with a critical eye, I can tell you that a lot of it was weak, rough, unpolished, and sometimes limited by my experience. My writing ability and business acumen are superior today to what they were 20 years ago, or even five years ago.

In a game context, you might ask, how can that be? After all, I was dedicated, driven and gave my work everything I had to give. I strove to be the best and hungered to create the best. So why wasn’t that work the best I would ever create? The simple answer is *experience*. I was a *first level* writer and game designer back then. Today, because I never stopped dreaming up new ideas, new approaches and ways to improve, I’m a much *higher level* character. My years of experience and practice at my craft have made me a superior writer, designer and businessman to what I was 27 years ago, or even five years ago. All the desire and raw talent in the world means squat without determined persistence and growth through experience. More than anything, just doing it – the practice and experience – helps a creator grow and improve at his craft. Today, I believe my writing and design work is better than ever, heck, the best it has ever been, but with a little more work I’ll continue to grow and improve.

I can also report that there have been quantum leaps in my development. Sudden and noticeable breakthroughs and improvements as if I had reached a new plateau or *Level of Experience*. That may sound corny, but it’s true. Every artist, writer, and creative person out there is nodding their head in agreement

as they read this, because they have experienced it themselves. For whatever reason, one day something just clicks. Yesterday, you struggled drawing hands and feet, or couldn't get shadowing and shading the way you wanted it. Heck, you've been working on them for freakin' years, and then, one day, you wake up, sit down at the drawing table, and it flows out of you like magic. It's a wonderful (and mildly strange) experience. Likewise, as much as we are loath to admit it when we are young, age plays a factor. I've seen it a hundred times in artists, where something happens around age 30-34 and the artist goes from good to great as if he has achieved a new level of expertise and his stats just went up. I don't know why, I've just seen it enough times to know it's true.

This type of *level advancement* where the individual reaches a new plateau is very dramatic and apparent in the world of sports too. A young NFL quarterback shows flashes of talent and ability, but like most before him, is wild, unfocused, and gets hammered his first few years in the big league. Over and over, the coaches and management talk about how the quarterback's skills and abilities *will* improve "with experience, maturity, and time." And that's not practice time either, but "real" experience on the field in real games on a professional level. Sure enough, a few years later the promising young quarterback is a top professional. Holy cow, look at Peyton Manning's first year or two in the NFL compared to today! The same is true in professional boxing. The typical heavyweight boxer does not usually reach his "prime" until around age 27 or 28, and nobody expects him to reach it sooner. Once the heavyweight boxer hits his prime, he's usually in top form till about age 32-35. Iron Mike Tyson was an anomaly, reaching his prime in his early and mid-twenties, but he also burned out early. Sure, some of this has to do with physical development, but come on, most boxers, and athletes in general, have been working at their craft for years, usually starting in their early teens, sometimes younger. **Note:** That's also why the *Palladium Experience Level System* has the characters advance in experience quickly at first – fueled by the enthusiasm and raw talent of youth combined with the thrill of learning something new – and then slows down, requiring the character to accumulate much more experience to reach the next, higher plateau.

**Brains and learning equal knowledge, experience and advancement.** You will also notice that the characters get the most experience from using their heads and role-playing interaction rather than killing things. Killing monsters is a good thing and fun to play, but ultimately it breaks down to little more than *target practice*, not growth as a human being or a deep *character*. Consequently, *experience* is gained from using the right skill at a critical moment, or using skill knowledge to win or survive a situation, or taking an action that rescues others.

Since the characters are, presumably good guys, self-sacrifice, acts of kindness, mercy, compassion, and heroics all earn experience. Not little things or common actions ("Hey, my character drives to the party store, do I get experience points for using my Automobile skill?") Um, the answer, by the way, is *no!*, but using the skill to make a difference, helping somebody, saving a life (or lives), figuring out an important clue, thwarting the villains, restoring peace, and so on. Likewise, I always award experience points (25-100) for players using their heads to figure out clues, puzzles, and making realizations or formulating

plans that are clever, imaginative, brilliant or critical to the story or plan of action. Heck, sometimes I award experience points if the character's idea or plan is dead wrong or fruitless, but at the same time is very clever or imaginative.

I may also award points for pure guts and courage, but *not* false bravado, foolish refusal to back down out of pride, spite or stupidity, or showing off.

Negative and foolish actions get no experience points.

Positive, helpful, noble and heroic measures as well as character interaction, playing in character, figuring things out, planning intelligent strategies and tactics, helping other characters, being heroes, and good ideas, all earn experience. So does playing a rogue or villain, if it is done in character and with style and intelligence.

Playing in character and building the story is what *role-playing* is all about, and the Palladium Game System is designed to encourage it.

**Tweaking the rules.** Having said all that, the role-playing experience is deeply personal and a little different for every group of gamers. That's why there really is *not* any right or wrong way to play, or any one game system or approach that is truly superior to another. A good game is a good game, and a bad game can be fixed by a good Game Master. Ultimately, it comes down to what *you* and your fellow players enjoy and want out of a game. Me, I want role-playing, memorable characters, adventure and epic stories, so that's how I designed the Palladium rules. That doesn't mean *you* can't take and tweak or modify the rules to satisfy *your* tastes. I have found that at least a third of the Game Masters tweak and modify some aspect of the rules of any game they play. These changes and tweaks are called "house rules" and as long as the majority of the players agree with and accept the changes, and the game is fun, then there's nothing wrong with it. Rules lawyers need to grow up.

**Style of play.** Likewise, everyone's style of play, from Game Master to player, is going to be different. Alex focuses on technology and science. Erick likes to play up aspects of puzzles, finding clues, and uncovering mysteries and new technology. Julius likes to focus on the adventure and heroics. Carmen likes guts and glory combat, carnage and cataclysmic finales (he may have been a Klingon in a previous life). Roger likes cunning, trickery, subtly and deception; nothing is ever quite what it seems. Me, I like sprawling, epic yarns with lots of subplots, twists, and turns driven by strong characters and conflicts with dynamic villains (and I mean villainous scum you'll love to hate). Another popular gaming approach is what many gaming elitists call "power gamers" or "hack 'n slash" gamers – guys and gals who thrive on shoot 'em up action and play maxed-out, powerhouse characters. Hey, while that's not my style of play there is nothing wrong with it.

**Never forget this is a game!** Entertainment. The whole idea is having *fun* with friends. If you and your pals are having fun, you're playing just fine. – *Kevin Siembieda*

## Experience Points are their own reward

In a game context, one of the tangible accomplishments and rewards the *player* receives is Experience Points for his or her fictional alter ego. Yes, the character or the player group as a whole may make money, get booty, find a powerful new

weapon, and/or win the adoration of those they've rescued. That's all cool, but the growth of the character via Experience Points for heroism, playing in character, and using your smarts are the real achievement for the individual player.

I have run many a game where the player characters got the snot kicked out them, lost valuable equipment and got no or little financial reward, but the players were tickled pink because they saved the day (even if that was saving one orphan child), because they worked as a team, had fun doing it, defeated the bad guys, won, and had the Experience Points (and self-satisfaction) to prove it. Somehow those things, with Experience Points (E.P.) punctuating it all, made all their effort worth doing. That is the other beautiful aspect of the Experience Point system, you are rewarded for your character's accomplishments.

## Experience Points & Their Application

The ultimate purpose of Experience Points and Experience Levels is to provide a means by which the player's character can grow and develop. The Palladium game system promotes a subjective method of using observation and logic to determine Experience Point rewards. In the past, some other games with experience systems have focused on the "kill factor," but what about the thought process? What about the decisions, plans and motives behind a particular action? Doesn't cleverness and a cool head count? Shouldn't the brilliant medical student playing a character with an I.Q. of 4 (and staying firmly in character, saying and doing things as the dull-witted character would, even though he realizes the stupidity as a player) get experience for playing in character? Absolutely! Considering how flexible and subjective most of the other role-playing conditions and rules are, there isn't much logic in having a strict, limited Experience Point system.

Each player's character involved in a given situation or confrontation should receive the appropriate Experience Points for that event. As G.M., I have found jotting down experience points in the moment when the character earned it is the best way to keep track. Not unlike scoring a boxing match round by round. Of course, in role-playing the character doesn't do something worth experience every single *round*, but when that pivotal deed or idea happens I make note of it. I simply make a list of my players and each character's name on a sheet of paper at the beginning of the game and jot down Experience Points throughout the game (totaling them up as I go along so I don't have a big math project or need a calculator at the end of the game). At the end of the gaming session, I, as the G.M., give *each* player the total E.P. amount along with a couple comments on what I thought were key moments for their character or just great role-playing. ("Man, I couldn't believe it when your character jumped up and . . . it was great."). Once the G.M. hands out Experience Points it's the player's responsibility to keep track of when the character hits next level. (By the way, I have never stopped in the middle of a game and said, "Hey, your character has just gone up in level, adjust your stats right here and now." Nope. The player will have to wait till the next time we play to boost his character's stats. I don't care if the character made next level with a thousand points to spare in the first ten minutes of the game, it's not appropriate to "level up" during an adventure.)

The difficulty with this method of determining experience is its subjectivity. The G.M. must utilize the experience outline with some thought. **For Example:** A gang of eight, third level psychics armed to the teeth attack and subdue a lone fourth level villain. The eight players should receive Experience Points for subduing a minor menace. After all, the poor bad guy was outnumbered eight to one, had no genuine chance of defeating the player group, and presented no real threat to the characters. However, if one or two first, second or third level characters subdued or killed the same villain, they should receive experience for subduing a major, or possibly a great menace, because the odds were stacked against them, the danger was considerable, and the character(s) had to use ingenuity and teamwork to defeat a villain much more powerful than they. The greater the risk and challenge, the greater the reward.

This approach promotes imaginative and creative playing and role-playing instead of mere hacking and slashing. Game Masters, don't feel that you have to shower your players with tons of Experience Points either. Be fair and tolerant. Let your players truly *earn* their Experience Points. If you have a group of players with characters rising rapidly in Experience Levels, you will know it's because they are bold, clever and imaginative.

## Experience & Hit Points

Each time a character reaches a new level of experience, the player gets to roll one six-sided die (1D6) and adds the number rolled to the character's Hit Points. This indicates the physical development and maturity of the character.

## Per Level of Experience

"Per level of experience" or similar phrases indicate that the character can perform a skill, power or ability at his personal, highest level of experience. This often indicates the amount of damage that can be inflicted or a duration of an effect from a psychic ability or magic spell.

## Experience Points Award Table

### A guide to awarding Experience Points

#### Combat

**Zero** points for fighting that's just to show off, too proud to stand down, gets the rest of the group in trouble, or any stupid or selfish reasoning.

**25-50** points for killing or subduing a *minor menace*.

**75-100** points for killing or subduing a *major menace*.

**150-400** points for killing or subduing a *great menace*. Additional Experience Points are likely.

#### Other Actions, Reasoning & Role-Playing

**10-25** points for performing the right skill (successful or not), at the right time, for the right reason. For mid to high level characters (4th level and up), this might apply only to skills performed when they are absolutely critical or done under stressful conditions.

**25-50** points for a clever, but futile idea.

**25-50** points for using good judgment or one's power or skill well.

**25-50** points for playing in character when it would have been easier not to.

**25-100** points for a clever, useful/helpful idea or action.

**50-100** points for avoiding unnecessary violence; self-restraint or talking, bluffing or intimidating oneself (and associates) out of trouble or danger.

**50-100** points for a small act of self-sacrifice, or an act of kindness, mercy, or compassion.

**50-100** points for insightful and helpful deductive reasoning or keen observation.

**50-100** points for a successful daring or heroic action (whether it was clever or not).

**75-150** points for playing in character/playing one's alignment when circumstance or powerful temptation begged otherwise.

**100** points for a quick thinking idea or action that was helpful.

**100-200** points for insight or deductive reasoning that plays a huge role in a critical plan or saving lives.

**200** points for a critical plan or action that saves the character's own life and/or a few comrades.

**400-1000** points for a critical plan or action that saves the entire group and/or many innocent people.

**100-300** points for endangering the character's own life (self-sacrifice) to help or save others.

**500-700** points for a genuine life and death self-sacrifice in a situation where the character's heroism seemed likely (or almost certain) to cost him his life. Leaping in front of an energy blast meant for someone else to save that person, even though the blast is *likely* to kill the hero, or offering his/her own life to save the group or an innocent person (and the exchange truly seems to be a death sentence with no apparent chance for escape). Odds are that the character *will* really die!

## Character Experience Levels

An experience table is provided for each O.C.C./Occupational Character Class. A character involved in an adventure gains Experience Points for his thoughts, actions and deeds. As these Experience Points accumulate, the character will reach new plateaus indicating his continuing growth, development, and mastery over his abilities and skills. Each time a player's character gets enough Experience Points to reach the next "level," his skills (% varies with each skill) and Hit Points (1D6 per level of experience) increase accordingly.

The maximum level a player character can reach is 15. We have found characters any higher than that tend to be difficult both to play and to G.M. Plus, given the typical scale of Experience Points used for this game, a player should have to run his character for years to get beyond even 10th level.

## Survivor/Ordinary People

Level 1: 0,000 - 1,875

Level 2: 1,876 - 3,750

Level 3: 3,751 - 7,250

Level 4: 7,251 - 14,100

Level 5: 14,101 - 21,200

Level 6: 21,201 - 31,200

Level 7: 31,201 - 41,200

Level 8: 41,201 - 51,200

Level 9: 51,201 - 71,200

Level 10: 71,201 - 101,500

Level 11: 101,501 - 136,500

Level 12: 136,501 - 186,500

Level 13: 186,501 - 236,500

Level 14: 236,501 - 286,500

Level 15: 286,501 - 326,500

## Scrounger & Retro-Savage

Level 1: 0,000 - 1,925

Level 2: 1,926 - 3,850

Level 3: 3,851 - 7,450

Level 4: 7,451 - 15,000

Level 5: 15,001 - 21,500

Level 6: 21,501 - 31,500

Level 7: 31,501 - 41,500

Level 8: 41,501 - 54,000

Level 9: 54,001 - 75,000

Level 10: 75,001 - 105,000

Level 11: 105,001 - 140,000

Level 12: 140,001 - 190,000

Level 13: 190,001 - 240,000

Level 14: 240,001 - 300,000

Level 15: 300,001 - 350,000

## Hound Master

Level 1: 0,000 - 2,000

Level 2: 2,001 - 4,000

Level 3: 4,001 - 8,200

Level 4: 8,201 - 16,400

Level 5: 16,401 - 24,500

Level 6: 24,501 - 34,600

Level 7: 34,601 - 49,700

Level 8: 49,701 - 69,800

Level 9: 69,801 - 94,900

Level 10: 94,901 - 129,000

Level 11: 129,001 - 179,100

Level 12: 179,101 - 229,200

Level 13: 229,201 - 279,300

Level 14: 279,301 - 329,400

Level 15: 329,401 - 389,500

## Reaper & Death Priest

Level 1: 0,000 - 2,050

Level 2: 2,051 - 4,100

Level 3: 4,101 - 8,200

Level 4: 8,201 - 16,400

Level 5: 16,401 - 25,600

Level 6: 25,601 - 35,700

Level 7: 35,701 - 50,800

Level 8: 50,801 - 69,900

Level 9: 69,901 - 95,000

Level 10: 95,001 - 130,100

Level 11: 130,101 - 180,200

Level 12: 180,201 - 230,300

Level 13: 230,301 - 282,400

Level 14: 282,401 - 354,500

Level 15: 354,501 - 426,600

## Soldier

Level 1: 0,000 - 2,100

Level 2: 2,101 - 4,200

Level 3: 4,201 - 8,400

Level 4: 8,401 - 16,800

Level 5: 16,801 - 24,000

Level 6: 24,001 - 34,200

Level 7: 34,201 - 49,400

Level 8: 49,401 - 68,800

Level 9: 68,801 - 93,200

Level 10: 93,201 - 128,400

Level 11: 128,401 - 168,800

Level 12: 168,801 - 218,200

Level 13: 218,201 - 278,400

Level 14: 278,401 - 328,800

Level 15: 328,801 - 388,000

## Shepherd of the Damned

Level 1: 0,000 - 2,120

Level 2: 2,121 - 4,240

Level 3: 4,241 - 8,480

Level 4: 8,481 - 17,200

Level 5: 17,201 - 25,400

Level 6: 25,401 - 35,800

Level 7: 35,801 - 51,000

Level 8: 51,001 - 71,200

Level 9: 71,201 - 96,400

Level 10: 96,401 - 131,600

Level 11: 131,601 - 181,800

Level 12: 181,801 - 232,000

Level 13: 232,001 - 282,200

Level 14: 282,201 - 342,400

Level 15: 342,401 - 402,600

## Half-Living

Level 1: 0,000 - 2,140

Level 2: 2,141 - 4,280

Level 3: 4,281 - 8,560

Level 4: 8,561 - 17,520

Level 5: 17,521 - 25,560

Level 6: 25,561 - 35,580

Level 7: 35,581 - 50,520

Level 8: 50,521 - 72,000

Level 9: 72,001 - 97,100

Level 10: 97,101 - 133,200

Level 11: 133,201 - 184,300

Level 12: 184,301 - 235,400

Level 13: 235,401 - 286,500

Level 14: 286,501 - 348,600

Level 15: 348,601 - 424,700

# Optional: Quick Character Creation

**The traditional method** of building a character requires reviewing all the available O.C.C.s and skill choices, rolling for attributes, deciding on an alignment, and reading and considerations of all kinds, as described in the *Character Creation* section, earlier in this role-playing game.

The traditional method of character creation is fine, fun and gives you, the player, a greater range of random attributes and much more control over the selection of skills and abilities. However, all that reading and thinking, and choosing, takes anywhere from 45 to 90 minutes. There's nothing wrong with that, and you can design a character completely around your desires. It is simply a matter of what you prefer.

**Using the Quick Character Creation tables** enable players (and G.M.s) to create a character in 10-15 minutes. Just roll as directed and follow the suggested guidelines.

**The tables for *Ways to Round Out Your Character*** can be used as part of this *Quick Roll* character process *and* by players creating characters the traditional way. They are a nice easy way to help provide your game character with instant personality and history.

## Optional Tables to Quick Roll Your Characters

**The random roll method should reduce character creation to 10-15 minutes!** How? It limits your choices, provides character attributes that only require one die roll to finish, points you to the O.C.C. (Occupational Character Class) you should pick from, and quickly determines most other aspects of the character with the roll of percentile dice.

In short, it eliminates a great deal of decision making!

**O.C.C. Note:** To Quick Roll your character follow the suggestions below. However, they are *suggestions* and as such, the



player may choose a completely different O.C.C. than recommended. Don't forget that playing the Survivor O.C.C./Ordinary People can be a blast. In fact, most of the play tests were done with all characters being Survivors/Ordinary People.

## Attributes and Suggested O.C.C.

Make a random roll or pick one of the eight categories presented in the table below. Each gives the character at least one mental or physical advantage and suggests the best O.C.C. (Occupational Character Class) based on that strength.

This is a fast way to roll up (or pick) a character with the attribute or two the player might most desire as one of his best natural aptitudes, followed by the number and modifier of all other attributes to fit the listed archetype (Brainy, Physically Strong, Fast Reflexes, Beauty, and so on).

Then follow the advice about the O.C.C. best suited to the character's strengths, go to that O.C.C., pick the remaining skills for that O.C.C., and use the following optional background tables to determine alignment, age, and everything else, and you are ready to play in a matter of minutes.

**Attribute Note:** The number of dice to roll for attributes is exactly as listed below. Do NOT roll an extra 1D6 if a 16-18 is rolled. When using this table, only one six-sided (1D6) or four-sided (1D4) die is rolled as listed for the end result.



**01-12% Brainy:** I.Q. 1D6+18, M.E. 1D6+12, M.A. 1D4+10, P.S. 1D6+9, P.P. 1D4+9, P.E. 1D4+8, P.B. 1D6+9, Spd 1D6+11.

Your character is best suited to an O.C.C. or "Ordinary People"/Survivor Occupation that involves mental challenges, assesses data, research, creating/building, learning, engineering, electronics, science, medicine, and strategies and tactics.

Your best O.C.C.s are *Scrounger*, *Hound Master* or *Survivor* (the latter with a background in education, art, writing, engineering, medicine, or science).

**13-26% Strong-Willed:** I.Q. 1D6+11, M.E. 1D6+19, M.A. 1D6+9, P.S. 1D6+9, P.P. 1D4+13, P.E. 1D6+10, P.B. 1D6+9, Spd 1D6+8.

Your character is best suited to an O.C.C. or "Ordinary People"/Survivor Occupation that involves focus, self-discipline, and challenges.

Your best O.C.C.s are *Shepherd of the Damned*, *Reaper* or *Survivor* (the latter with a background in law enforcement, healing, research or helping people).

**27-39% Charismatic:** I.Q. 1D6+10, M.E. 1D6+9, M.A. 1D6+18, P.S. 1D4+10, P.P. 1D4+10, P.E. 1D6+8, P.B. 1D6+14, Spd 1D6+9.

Your character is best suited to an O.C.C. or "Ordinary People"/Survivor Occupation that involves leadership, officer training, teaching, communications, performing, espionage, and subterfuge.

Your best O.C.C.s are *Shepherd of the Damned*, *Soldier*, or *Survivor* (the latter with a background in investigation, espionage, public speaking or entertainment).

**40-51% Physically Strong:** I.Q. 1D4+10, M.E. 1D4+10, M.A. 1D6+10, P.S. 1D6+19, P.P. 1D4+12, P.E. 1D6+15, P.B. 1D6+12, Spd 1D6+11.

Your character is best suited to an O.C.C. or "Ordinary People"/Survivor Occupation that involves physicality, mechanics, athletics, combat, and strength.

Your best O.C.C.s are probably *Half-Living*, *Soldier* or *Survivor* (the latter with a background in working with your hands, building, mechanics, combat or athletic competition).

**52-65% Fast Reflexes and High Dexterity:** I.Q. 1D4+10, M.E. 1D6+9, M.A. 1D6+8, P.S. 1D6+9, P.P. 1D6+19, P.E. 1D6+9, P.B. 1D6+10, Spd 1D6+17.

Your character is best suited to an O.C.C. or "Ordinary People"/Survivor Occupation that involves the precision use of hands, tools, weapons, targeting, fast physical reaction, combat, building, surgery and other areas where steady and fast hands are a key element.

Your best O.C.C.s are probably *Reaper*, *Scrounger*, or *Survivor* (the latter with a background in science, racing/driving, building, electronics, mechanical engineering, medicine/surgery, combat or athletic competition).

**66-78% Great Endurance:** I.Q. 1D4+9, M.E. 1D6+14, M.A. 1D6+8, P.S. 1D6+9, P.P. 1D6+9, P.E. 1D6+19, P.B. 1D6+9, Spd 1D6+12.

Your character is best suited to an O.C.C. or "Ordinary People"/Survivor Occupation that requires physical durability and mental toughness.

Your best O.C.C.s are probably *Soldier*, *Hound Master*, or *Survivor* (the latter with a background in working with your hands, building, mechanics, wilderness survival, combat or athletic competition).

**79-88% A Beauty or Pretty Boy:** I.Q. 1D4+10, M.E. 1D6+8, M.A. 1D6+15, P.S. 1D6+11, P.P. 1D6+8, P.E. 1D6+9, P.B. 1D4+20, Spd 1D6+9.

Your character is best suited to an O.C.C. or “Ordinary People”/Survivor Occupation that involves teaching, communications, performing, trickery or subterfuge.

Your best O.C.C.s are *Scrounger*, *Shepherd of the Damned*, or *Survivor* (the latter with a background in entertainment, public speaking, modeling, communications, service provider, espionage or con artist).

**89-00% Fast as Lightning:** I.Q. 1D4+9, M.E. 1D6+9, M.A. 1D6+8, P.S. 1D6+9, P.P. 1D6+14, P.E. 1D6+10, P.B. 1D6+10, Spd 2D6+20.

Your character is best suited to an O.C.C. or “Ordinary People”/Survivor Occupation that involves quickness and dexterity, including targeting, combat, fast physical reaction, and other areas where fast hands and feet are an asset.

Your best O.C.C.s are probably *Hound Master*, *Reaper*, *Scrounger*, *Soldier* or *Survivor* (the latter with a background in transportation, combat or athletic competition).

## Ways to Round Out Your Character

Our decades of experience designing games has shown us that players and Game Masters enjoy having as much background and details about their characters as possible.

We aim to please, so we present a series of optional tables that will help players to quickly establish some background, personality and bonuses for the character they are about to create.

Remember, these are *optional tables*, which means a player may make up his own background, disposition, and aspects for his character *rather than* roll on the tables that follow. HOWEVER, the player should not be allowed to pick and choose which tables he wants to roll on, with the exception of the last two. If the player wants to roll on one table (like *Character Bonuses*), he should *roll* on them *all*. Roll percentile dice for random determination.

**Note:** The nuts and bolts of creating a character are presented in the Game Rules section. This is the fun, easy background data that helps make your character memorable.

### Alignment

**01-25% Principled:** Good, honest, loyal and law-abiding team player.

**26-50% Scrupulous:** Good and trustworthy, but sometimes bends the rules.

**51-75% Unprincipled:** A rogue with a heart of gold. Tempted to take short cuts and watch out for number one (himself), but when push comes to shove, always does the right thing (even if he hates himself for it).

**76-00% Anarchist:** Self-serving, may choose to be a team player or not.

**Note:** These are supposed to be heroes, so no evil alignments are part of this table.

### Sex

**Note:** We have found it is usually best to let the player *pick* the sex of his or her character. For those who would prefer to make a random roll, here’s the table:

**01-60%** Male.

**61-00%** Female.

### Age

**Note:** These are all optional tables and it may be best if the player ignores this table and picks any age he’d like for the character.

**01-10%** 15-17 years old.

**11-20%** 18-21 years old.

**21-50%** 22-29 years old.

**51-70%** 30-35 years old.

**71-80%** 36-40 years old.

**81-85%** 41-45 years old.

**86-90%** 46-50 years old.

**91-93%** 51-55 years old.

**94-96%** 56-60 years old.

**97-98%** 61-65 years old.

**99%** 66-70 years old.

**100%** 71 years or older.

### Physical Build

**01-15%** Skinny.

**16-40%** Lean and athletic.

**41-50%** Built; muscular and chiseled.

**51-80%** Average.

**81-90%** A bit overweight.

**91-00%** Overweight.

### Height

**01-25% Short:** Under 5 feet, 8 inches (1.73 m).

**26-75% Average:** 5 feet, 8 inches to 6 feet (1.73 to 1.8 m).

**76-95% Tall:** 6 feet, one inch to 6 feet, 6 inches (1.85 to 1.98 m).

**96-00% Very Tall:** 6 feet, 7 inches to 7 feet (2-2.1 m).

### Birth Order for Humans

**01-25%** First Born.

**26-50%** Second.

**51-75%** Middle.

**76-00%** Last.

### Environment Growing Up

**01-20%** Agricultural: farm or ranch.

**21-40%** Rural: country community, small town or village.

**41-60%** Suburbia. Prosperous, upper-middle class city or town. **61-85%** Big City Person. A large, populated city like Miami, New York, Detroit, Chicago, Toronto, Mexico City, London, Paris, Hong Kong, etc. was home.

**86-00%** Urban City. A small to medium-sized city.

## Survivor Family Loss

**01-60% Lost everyone.** Doesn't believe he has any family left; last in the line. Feels great loss.

**61-73% Separated from family in the chaos.** Doesn't know who is dead or alive. Likes to think those loved most are still alive but doesn't know.

**74-88% Lost many, but** closest loved ones (spouse, parents, children) survived and are living in a Safe Haven Community.

**89-00% Never had much in the way of family** to begin with, wasn't close to those gone missing and presumed dead. Feels little personal loss.

## Relationship to Teammates

**Roll for each character in the player group.**

**01-10%** Sibling.

**11-20%** Cousin or other relative.

**21-40%** Just met, no relationship yet developed.

**41-50%** Friend.

**51-70%** Fellow survivor and that's good enough for him.

**71-80%** Rival, friendly competition to outdo the other.

**81-90%** Finds character a bit annoying, but tolerable.

**91-95%** Indifferent about him, that might change with time.

**96-00%** Dislikes the other character.

## Special Aptitude Bonuses

**01-10% Sure Shot:** +2 to strike with all types of projectile weapons from guns to bow and arrow. Furthermore, the usual penalties for being off balance, moving, etc., are half. Does not apply to explosives and thrown weapons.

**11-20% Natural Combat Driver:** +8% to Motorcycle or one Transportation skill of choice, +1 on initiative and +1 to dodge while driving, and +1 to roll with impact when piloting any type of vehicle.

**21-30% Natural Zombie Hunter:** +1 on initiative, +1 to strike, +1 to dodge, +2 to save vs disease, +2 to save vs Horror Factor, and +5% to save vs coma and death.

**31-40% High Perception and Solid Gut Instincts:** +1D4 on Perception Rolls. Roll 1D4 once in front of the Game Master when the character is first created to determine what this bonus is from that time forward.

**41-50% Quick Reaction Time:** +1D4 on initiative. Roll 1D4 once in front of the Game Master when the character is first created to determine what this bonus is from that time forward.

**51-60% Strongman:** +1D6+3 to P.S. attribute and +1 to pull punch.

**61-70% Fast Learner and Jack of Many Trades:** Select one extra M.O.S. if a Soldier, or 1D4+2 Elective skills for all other O.C.C.s, but without benefit of the usual bonuses for them.

**71-80% Quick Reflexes:** +1 attack per melee and +1 to dodge.

**81-90% Fearless:** +1D4+2 to save vs Horror Factor. However, as a result, the character *may* also be a hot shot who takes foolish risks and daring chances.

**91-00% Charismatic/Charmer:** +1D4+2 to M.A., this character is especially likable and affable.

## Outlook on Earth's Future

**Note:** This category should be completely optional. Players should not be forced to roll on this table.

**01-30% Pragmatic Hero.** The odds are stacked against humanity, but we can't give up. This character feels he and his fellow survivors have no choice but to fight. To give up means death . . . or worse, life as a monster, as the walking dead. He prays their valiant efforts will be enough to prevent total obliteration of human life at the hands of the Creeping Doom.

**31-70% Dedicated Hero.** For this character it is a matter of life or death, and he chooses *life*. That means saving as many human lives as possible, and destroying as many walking dead, cultists and lowlives as he can. He or she is ready and willing to fight to the death.

**71-80% Idealistic Hero.** "We hold the fate of humanity in our hands, and we must triumph," is the motto of this positive and unrelenting hero, and nothing changes his mind. To this eternal optimist, losing is not an option, and he is convinced the human race will triumph and rebuild a better civilization.

**81-90% Nihilistic Hero.** Yeah, the odds are impossible and life as we know it is probably doomed, but this grim hero isn't about to give up. He intends to fight to the bitter end, despite the odds, and die defiant, free and human. Though the Nihilist would be loath to admit it, the character hopes his "inevitable sacrifice" will have made a difference. He intends to fight to the death and has left instructions to his teammates that under no circumstances is he to be allowed to become one of the walking dead. If there is no escape or rescue possible, he expects someone to kill him before the zombies take his life. "Do not let me rise from the dead as one of them."

**91-00% Fated Hero.** This character doesn't know what fate has in store for him, and doesn't lose a lot of sleep worrying over it. He has decided that there must be a higher purpose to his survival, and he will just let fate guide his destiny and put him wherever it is he's supposed to be. He just hopes he'll always know what it is he's supposed to do, and that he makes the right choices.

## Disposition

**Note:** This category should be completely optional. Players should not be forced to roll on this table.

**01-05% Bitter and hardened by the Zombie Apocalypse.** Has little compassion or sympathy for others, especially those who are foolish. Tends to be intolerant, short-tempered and gruff with everyone. Shows no mercy to the enemy. The carnage and the sight of the dead has no obvious impact on this "war is hell, suck it up," individual.

**06-10% Suspicious of others.** Doesn't trust easily, secretive, and is suspicious of everyone and everything new, especially the Half-Living, Retro-Savages and Cultists. This is a, "the glass is half empty, and you can't have mine," kind of person.

**11-15% Shy.** Quiet and timid, tends to be a loner, but fairly sure of oneself.

**16-23% Gung-ho,** guts and glory type who sees self as a hero. Likes combat, is quick to action, and hates sitting around, waiting.

**24-29% Worrywart,** nervous and cautious.

**30-35% Hot-head**, quick-tempered, emotional, but basically a good guy or gal.

**36-43% Schemer**, gambler who likes to take chances.

**44-46% Blabbermouth**, nice person, but too talkative and has trouble keeping a secret.

**47-50% Optimist**: The glass is half full for this positive character. He tries to learn from his mistakes, find the good in everything, and sincerely believes humans will survive to build a better world. Tends to be too trusting and a bit naive.

**51-55% Wild man**, cocky, overconfident, takes unnecessary risks.

**56-58% Nice**, friendly, courteous and hospitable. Cares about his teammates and their mission.

**59-62% Fatalist**. Tends to have a dark outlook on life and the future, but something inside won't let the character give up. The zombies will probably destroy them all. Humans probably don't stand a chance. BUT you can't just give up, you have to keep trying, and if you are going to die, might as well take as many zombies and cultists with you as you can.

**63-67% Snob**, arrogant, feels superior to others.

**68-72% Tough guy**, self-reliant, independent, and a bit of a cocky lone wolf.

**73-76% Braggart**. May be a nice person, but likes to brag about his or her abilities, accomplishments and exploits.

**77-80% Paranoid**, trusts no one until they have proven themselves trustworthy and loyal many times over.

**81-84% Paternal**, overprotective of others, especially young characters and green survivors.

**85-87% Hero**. High ideals and feels he has something to prove. Tends to follow orders to the "T," is very formal, follows procedures and is by the book. Always against breaking the rules, and hates bending the rules except under exceptional circumstances.

**88-91% Easy going**. Unflappable and calm most of the time; laid back and accepting of others. Trusts almost anyone until they are proven unworthy of that trust.

**92-95% Complainer**. Constantly aggravated about something.

**96-98% Peacemaker**. Hates discord between friends, family, and co-workers and likes to help others mend fences.

**99-00% Schemer/Dreamer**. Always looking ahead, never in the present, and dislikes the past. Thinking ahead and plotting for the future is a good trait sometimes, but a bad one other times, because he tends to miss the obvious ("what if . . .") and forgets the reality of the here and now.

# Insanity

The use of insanities is left entirely to the discretion of the Game Master. However, considering the nature of this game and the horrific forces our heroes battle every day, it seems reasonable (and even likely) that some or all may ultimately suffer from one or more insanities. Certainly, any number of Non-Player Characters, villains and monsters may suffer from insanities.

**Designer Note:** At the suggestion of, then, social worker and gamer, Paula Leasure, insanities were made an *option* and have appeared in Palladium products since the release of the **Palladium Fantasy RPG®** in 1983. Though we have always kept them "optional" rules, it seems that most players (as in 97%) use and enjoy the insanity tables. I think it's because a) it makes sense, b) there is much more openness about real life mental health, and c) an insanity (or three) gives the character the classic "tragic flaw." Personally, I suspect "c" is the biggest factor. Having one or more insanities makes the character more interesting. It gives him or her more personality, history (because the insanity is always the result of a traumatic experience) and maybe even a badge of honor if the hero suffers because he was trying to save somebody, or destroy a terrible evil. Once acquired, the insanity becomes a character quirk and an Achilles' heel; a weakness or problem that is always present and something which the hero must struggle to overcome. Suffering from a minor insanity like a phobia or obsession is the most common and least debilitating of the insanities.

**Please Note:** The inclusion of mental illness is not meant to belittle or make light of mental problems. I, personally, know a number of people who struggle with depression, anxiety, addiction, and bipolar disorders, among others. Mental illness is no laughing matter and I'm proud of each and every one of my friends who haven't given up and fight to find balance and contentment in their lives. I have the greatest respect for the healthcare professionals who struggle equally hard to help these tortured souls. However, none of that changes the fact that having insanities in a *role-playing game* is interesting, appropriate and fun to play. They are especially appropriate in a game that deals with horror, fear, survival and monsters.

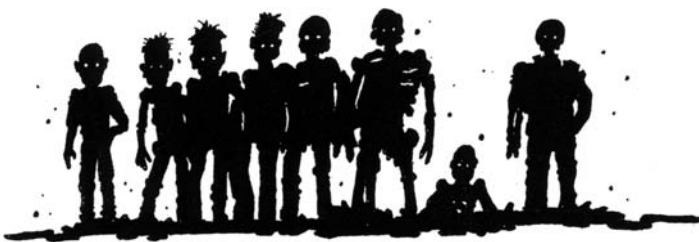
— Kevin Siembieda, Game Designer

## How Insanity Works in Dead Reign™

All player characters are assumed to start off mentally and emotionally sound. Any insanities are developed from that point forward and are the result of mental, emotional or physical trauma from events that occur in the game.

Game Masters should be very judicious in handing out insanity and *not* make everyone crazy or any one character bogged down with a zillion debilitating illnesses. A character that is a mental wreck is no fun to play, and dishing out insanities like candy on Halloween is mean-spirited or foolish. Use common sense and logic.

Being scared out of one's wits is not grounds for insanity. Neither is being attacked by something that slithered out of a nightmare, especially if the character kicks its butt and comes



out winning the day. Likewise, as odd as it may sound, the walking dead are dangerous and scary, but not all that horrifying to people (like the player characters) who fight them day in and day out. It's funny what the resilient human mind can acclimate itself to deal with.

However, being buried alive for hours or days, or nearly dying at the hands of a zombie, or torture by a Terror Cult, or witnessing the sacrifice of several children, or something truly abhorrent (i.e., the worst thing most people could imagine), these *may* be grounds for insanity. Use *yourself* as the barometer. If you think some particular experience would send you off the deep end, then it's probably fair to assume the same thing would happen to the player character or an NPC and assign him an appropriate insanity.

Also take into consideration the character's personality and the way he/she has been played. Let's use this common, real life example: I know many people, male and female, who are scared of, or hate, bugs, especially spiders, worms, cockroaches, and other "creepy crawlers." Heck, I've known women who don't even want anything as harmless as a moth or grasshopper near them. Now, imagine such a person being plunged from head to toe into a vat full of live, disgusting insects. They'd freak out. And here comes an example of freaking out without getting an insanity: The threat of it happening, it nearly happening, and even being dropped into the vat of living vermin for 1-10 minutes will cause the individual to scream and squirm and try to escape (if possible), but it's *NOT* going to drive them nuts. However, being completely covered in the insects for an hour or more, or buried alive with them, or believing the insects will eat him alive, *that* might give a character a lasting phobia about bugs or being buried alive, or both. **HOWEVER**, it would not have that effect on everyone. Staying with the real life analogy, *I like bugs*. Yep, Kevin Siembieda is a bug guy. As a kid I used to catch, collect, study and even raise bugs. I've read up on them and handled them, and find them fascinating. I know which ones are dangerous and which ones aren't (which is most insects found in urban settings, by the way). So while being lowered into a vat of cockroaches or worms or maggots would be disgusting, it wouldn't freak me out. Number one, I know they are harmless. Number two, they don't scare or revolt me. I'd be fine. Now if I was confronted by a supernatural creature whose body was composed of living insects, and/or the insects looked alien, or behaved in an unnatural way, or had weird powers, *that* might freak me out, and *might* traumatize me to the point that I would get a lasting insanity from the experience – though not likely if the bugs turned out to be harmless. **Note:** Bear in mind the character's M.E. (Mental Endurance) attribute as a helpful guideline. If the character's M.E. is 15 or higher he's probably very mentally resilient, but another character with an M.E. of 6, 7 or 8 experiencing the same thing might be traumatized for life!

In my opinion, it is only the most deep-rooted, gut-level, life and death traumatic experiences (including the character dying and being brought back to life via extraordinary medical means, as well physical and/or psychological torture – and all torture has a psychological purpose and impact) that should result in a lasting insanity that is *assigned* to a character by the G.M. without any chance to save. Not a mamby-pamby, little fright, but life threatening, mind numbing experiences. Oh, and the G.M. might assign a specific phobia or other insanity or simply in-



struct the player to *roll* on one of the following tables for a *random* insanity.

**A psychological trauma** may result from a violent, emotional experience or shock. As a survivor of the Zombie Apocalypse, the characters are likely to be somewhat desensitized to horror, violence and blood and gore. A trauma that results in an insanity should have to be quite horrible.

**Save vs Insanity dice rolls.** Unless the trauma was so severe that the G.M. is sure an insanity is appropriate, the character should get to roll to *save vs insanity*. (This also applies to curses and some magic in other Palladium RPG settings.) In these cases, the player needs to roll 1D20 and get a 12 or higher to save (the exact number required will vary depending on the creatures or magic involved, and will always be higher if cast by a Demon Lord, Dark God or Alien Intelligence). The character may add any M.E. attribute bonus to *save vs insanity*.

## Trauma

Having a character roll on the insanity tables after a terrible trauma is very appropriate, realistic and fun; adding a new element to the character and the ongoing story. What constitutes a traumatic experience is, in part, up to the Game Master and the actual situation.

The following is a guide to some traumatic situations requiring a roll for an insanity.

**Accidentally causing (or being unable to prevent) the death of several innocent people.** Primarily applies to characters of a good or Unprincipled alignment and who are likely to be engulfed by feelings of regret, sorrow and failure. Roll on the *Random Insanity Table*.

In the alternative (or in addition to the insanity), the character might turn to alcohol or drugs (can be a G.M. or player's decision), drinking or getting high to forget the incident or to punish himself for his perceived failure. Yet another alternative might include becoming *obsessed* with the creature, person, cult, or group responsible; hates it/them and longs to destroy those directly responsible and, perhaps, those like them.

**Death!** The character dies – or at least falls into a coma – having been killed in a brutal or terrifying manner, or at the hands of a truly horrific being or circumstance (eaten alive, being converged on by zombies, almost getting torn apart, being turned into the walking dead, etc.). Roll on the *Random Insanity Table*.

**Drug induced hallucinations that were particularly terrifying, hideous, or realistic.** Roll once on the *Phobia Table*. If extremely traumatic, lengthy, or reoccurring hallucinations, roll on the *Random Insanity Table*. A real life encounter with the subject of the traumatic hallucination is likely to cause more trauma. 70% chance of developing another insanity; roll on the *Random Insanity Table*.

**Long period of physical and/or mental torture.** Two to eight weeks: Roll once on the *Random Insanity Table*. Nine weeks to several months: Roll once on the *Random Insanity Table* and once on the *Neurosis Table*.

**Near Death experience: A terrifying, frightening or unusual brush with death.** Roll on the *Random Insanity Table*.

**Near Death experienced under horrifying, gruesome or bizarre circumstances,** like at the hands of a slobbering or terrifying monster, or excruciating method of being killed. Roll on the *Neurosis Table* or, perhaps, the *Phobia Table*.

**Possession/manipulation into doing several repugnant, despicable or terrible acts.** Actions that go against the character's moral fiber and/or which hurt loved ones or innocent people, particularly children. Roll on the *Psychosis Table*.

**Prolonged physical and/or emotional abuse.** May involve weeks, months or years of captivity, belittlement, threats, beatings, torture, and acts of extreme humiliation. Roll on the *Random Insanity Table*. If an obsession is rolled, the obsession is probably a deep rooted hatred toward beings of that nature or perhaps anyone who imposes such humiliation on people, and a desire to strike out at them.

**Sensory Deprivation,** probably for several days, but perhaps only several hours if the deprivation is accompanied by deliberate, directed input designed to generate terror, a sense of deep loss and other extreme emotions. Roll on the *Psychosis* or *Affective Disorder Table*.

**Severe physical disability or ugly scarring.** 01-50% chance of *alcohol or drug addiction*, or roll on the *Obsession Table*.

**Severe emotional trauma.** 01-50% chance of *alcoholism or drug addiction*; drinks to forget or to punish himself for a perceived failure. 51-90% develops a *Neurosis*. 91-00% develops an *Affective Disorder*.

**Transformation.** The character has experienced being turned into something physically (or emotionally) horrible, monstrous/inhuman. Roll on the *Random Insanity Table*.

**Violation.** The character is physically, mentally or emotionally violated and molested. Roll on the *Random Insanity Table*.

**Witnessing or experiencing a shocking, grotesque atrocity.** Roll on the *Phobia Table*.

**Witnessing the terrible or shocking death of a deeply loved one.** Roll on the *Psychosis Table*.

## Insanity Tables

Roll percentile dice for random determinations.

### Random Insanity Table

**Note:** More than one phobia, obsession, psychosis, and affective disorder is possible. If the same one is rolled, ignore it and roll again.

**01-10% Reborn.** The trauma turns the character into a different person. Alignment reversal: Good becomes evil, evil becomes good, Anarchist becomes Principled or Scrupulous, Unprincipled becomes Aberrant or Anarchist. Also make a random roll on the *Disposition Table* in the *Ways to Out Your Character* section.

**11-20% Neurosis.** Make a random roll on the *Neurosis Table* in this section.

**21-25% Compulsive Liar/Cannot Tell the Truth.** Lies about big and little things, even if of a good alignment. Can't help himself. Most lies are harmless, but they can be annoying and can get the character and his teammates into trouble.

**26-30% Kleptomaniac.** A compulsion to steal, even if the character is of good alignment and doesn't need the item. Steals inexpensive and valuable items, basically whatever strikes the character's fancy.

**31-40% Obsession.** Make a random roll on the Obsession Table elsewhere in this section.

**41-50% Phobia.** Make a random roll on the Phobia Table elsewhere in this section.

**51-60% Affective Disorder.** Make a random roll on the Affective Disorder Table elsewhere in this section.

**61-70% Hypochondriac.** The character is constantly concerned about sickness, disease and poisoning. He exaggerates the slightest discomfort and illness he may suffer and is constantly under the belief that he is "coming down" with something. He *may* avoid others who are sick even with the common cold, may blame others for his illnesses ("he coughed in my direction yesterday") and is likely to have a half-dozen "quack" cures for every ailment imaginable. Most taste terrible, or are ridiculous, and none of them work.

**71-80% Psychosis.** Make a random roll on the Psychosis Table elsewhere in this section.

**81-87% Recluse.** The character prefers to be alone. He is usually quiet and unobtrusive, staying in the background and hoping to remain unnoticed. Feels uncomfortable in crowds and is -10% on skill performance and -1 to Perception Rolls when in the spotlight (everyone is watching or have their hopes pinned on the character's actions). No penalties when nobody is watching, when alone or with just a few people.

**88-94% Homicidal Rage.** Despite the name, the character often seems outwardly calm and composed, but is extremely intense and focused on revenge/striking out at the person or cause of his quiet, burning rage. May seriously hurt or kill someone without realizing it. Penalties: Cannot pull a punch, will not dodge, does an extra 1D6 damage in all physical attacks and does triple damage on a Natural 20; has extreme difficulty controlling himself/stopping himself from going too far (may need somebody to pull him off his opponent). This even applies to minor provocations where the character gets caught in a brawl or becomes the target of insults, is cut off in traffic (road rage), etc., let alone the heat of actual combat. Friends and associates should be prepared to intercede and pull the character off his victims. **Note:** This is not a berserker rage and the character can be reasoned with, calmed down and will not attack friends without considerable provocation.

**95-00% Addiction.** Whatever the trigger, the character is addicted to drugs or alcohol and is on a path of self-destruction whether he sees it that way or not. See the description on Addiction toward the end of this section.

## Affective Disorders Table

**01-10% Mania.** The character is highly motivated, positive about himself and admires his abilities and capabilities. He is endlessly energetic (hyperactive), but ignores his own limits and makes rash, impulsive decisions. Becomes perturbed by criticism or any suggestion of inadequacy and blames others for his mistakes and shortfalls. Penalties: -1 on Perception Rolls and -10% on skill performance (both because he cannot stay focused

on any one thing, and is easily distracted and bored), but is +1 on initiative and +1 to dodge.

**11-20% Bipolar.** The character suffers from dramatic and erratic mood swings that affect the personality and performance. Roll percentile dice once every 8 hours or when a situation radically changes (good to bad, bad to worse, bad to good, etc.).

*01-20% Balanced:* A relatively normal state of mind. However, because the character has come to crave the highs, he does feel inadequate when "normal." Penalties: -5% on skill performance and -1 on all combat moves (strike, parry, etc.) when the character is in the limelight or has to make a critical move or skill. **Note:** Normal is fleeting without drugs, and most bipolar people hate taking drugs because they make them feel detached from their emotions and unable to experience the extreme highs the person enjoys even if it means suffering through the lows.

*21-60% Depressed:* Feels sad, inferior and unmotivated as if mired in glue. Penalties: -1 on Perception Rolls, -3 on initiative, -1 on all combat moves (strike, parry, etc.), and -20% to *all* skills (including Secondary Skills).

*61-00% Manic:* Feels positive, energized, empowered and capable of achieving anything! However, he is also quick to make arbitrary decisions, take unnecessary risks, and ignore the general consensus ("But I thought..."). Bonuses: +1 on Perception Rolls, +1 on initiative, +10% on *all* skills (including Secondary Skills).

**21-30% Frightened by loud noises** to the point of cowering (loses initiative and -1 attack per melee round) and wetting oneself.

**31-40% Death Wish.** For some reason the character doesn't feel he deserves to live and, subconsciously, he puts himself in harm's way, takes dangerous risks, and is willing to sacrifice himself for others, not out of bravery, but because he is less deserving to live. A character who battles zombies, for example, is likely to believe it is his destiny to die at the hands of an inhuman fiend. The character is not completely suicidal nor obsessed with death or dying, but certain he will come to a violent and untimely end. In fact, it may only be the character's greater sense of responsibility, duty or compassion that keeps him fighting, mainly to help others.

**41-50% Hates bugs of all kinds**, and will jump up and try to kill them whenever they are noticed within 15 feet (4.6 m) of him. This includes cockroaches/beetles, fireflies, bees, wasps, mosquitoes, flies, moths, butterflies, centipedes, caterpillars, and spiders. Tends to ignore worms and tiny ants.

**51-60% Autonomic Reaction.** Hands shake when the character is under stress, has to do something important, feels threatened or feels angry. Penalties: -3 to strike with a gun or other ranged weapon, -15% on any skill that requires a steady hand and precision hand-eye coordination (Forgery, Palming, surgery, most repair skills, etc.).

**61-70% Trauma Induced Migraine.** The character gets a severe migraine headache (constant throbbing and shooting pain, nausea) as a reaction to one of the following (roll once to determine what is always the cause of the migraines): *01-20%* having to figure out a puzzle or mystery, *21-40%* when faced with life and death situations or high stress situations where other people's lives are at stake, *41-60%* when faced with intelligent zombies, *61-80%* when having to deal with people the

character believes are depraved or insane, *81-00%* frustrated or angry. Lasts for as long as the stress remains. Penalties: -1 on all combat moves (strike, parry, etc.), -10% on skill performance and -10% to Spd.

**71-80% Outraged by acts of violence**, becoming violent himself. 01-72% chance of going berserk and attacking the perpetrator of the violent act without regard for self. Bonuses: +1 to strike and +2 to damage when berserk.

**81-90% Hates music and musicians**, and will try to destroy or stop the source of those terrible noises.

**91-95% Intimidated by the spoken language when under threatening, frightening and pressure situations**. Cannot speak meaningful sentences (must use sign language or written communication), and has difficulty understanding long sentences.

**96-00% Hysterical Blindness**. When under pressure (battle, an important opportunity, torture, etc.), the character loses his sight until the pressure is removed. Roll for each situation. 01-88% likelihood of happening. -10 to strike, parry, dodge and all combat rolls while blind; no initiative and skill performance is half. Blindness lasts for 1D6+1 melee rounds.

## Neurosis Table

**01-07% Anxiety**. The individual is overwhelmed by an unreasoning fear or apprehension that does not require a real source (i.e., the character isn't afraid of a specific thing, as is the case of a phobia, but generally feels worried, anxious and disoriented). Those who suffer from anxiety find it debilitating, feeling out of sync, foggy and tense most of the time. Roll percentile every 8 hours to see how the character is feeling and the degree of penalties. Oddly enough, a true crisis situation may not make the character feel worse.

Penalties: *01-25% Mild Anxiety*: -5% on skill performance, -1 on Perception Rolls, and -1 to save vs Horror Factor.

*26-50% Moderate Anxiety*: -15% on skill performance, -2 on Perception Rolls, and -2 to save vs Horror Factor.

*51-75% Severe Anxiety*: -30% on skill performance, -3 on Perception Rolls, and -4 to save vs Horror Factor. Missing blocks of memory is also a symptom of severe anxiety. They have trouble remembering details and may not remember events, television shows or an article they read just 12-24 hours ago, but might remember something that happened a few minutes later in clear detail. ("What did I eat for breakfast? Hmm, I don't think I ate breakfast. Um, I don't remember.")

*76-00% Feeling Good!* No noticeable anxiety. No penalties; +1 on Perception Rolls.

**08-14% Panic Attacks**. The character suffers from mild anxiety around the clock, but is also given to severe panic attacks when alone and scared, when something really important relies on the character or he is in the spotlight with everyone looking, and when feeling frustrated or confused. A panic attack will cause the character's heart to race, he may not be able to catch a breath, pain may shoot through the chest or stomach, and he can't think clearly. Penalties: Reduce the number of attacks per melee round, combat bonuses, Spd, Perception Rolls, and skill performance all by *half*. Note: The duration of a panic attack may feel like an eternity, but only lasts 1D6 melee rounds (often less than a minute).

**15-21% Fear of Animals**. More than a simple phobia, this character has been so traumatized (perhaps chewed on by the family pet while a little nipper) that he avoids all animals, will push away the cutest pet, run away when confronted even by a tiny animal like a mouse, and will kill it whenever he feels cornered by one. Insects, fish, sea-life and fellow humanoids are not included in this irrational fear.

**22-28% Disgusted by anything sticky** and will go to any length to avoid touching it.

**29-35% Fear of the Dark**. Never liked the dark when younger, hates it since being exposed to the walking dead and knowing they can see his life energy in the dark! And who knows what other horrors may be lurking in the dark? The character becomes a gibbering turnip when locked or placed in dark places, alone. Penalties: Only one attack/action per melee round, no bonuses, no skill capabilities, speed is reduced by half. Will collapse (fall unconscious) after 2D4 melee rounds and will remain catatonic until removed from the darkness or a light is lit. Has trouble sleeping at night. Also -3 to save vs Horror Factor that involves creatures of darkness, but not zombies.

**36-42% Worried about Germs/Disease and Obsessed with Cleanliness**. Washes the hands frequently, hates using public bathrooms, dislikes shaking hands, avoids other people's garbage, leftover food, and corpses, will not drink out of the same container from which someone else drank, nor touch food that someone else took a bite out of or was handled by someone with an obvious cold or cough, and must clean up any area he has to use.

**43-49% Invasion of the Body Snatchers**: Acute paranoia toward all things supernatural, including zombies of every stripe, Death Priests, cultists and people who claim to have magical powers, seem possessed or can control the walking dead. This character is terrified of becoming one of the living dead, going crazy or being possessed! Avoids corpses and strangers, especially if there is the slightest chance they might be a zombie. ("They're out to get you! They could be anybody!! Anybody! Even ... you!?!") Especially fears and loathes Death Priests (who knows what powers they might possess), Thinkers, Mock Zombies and even Half-Living.

**50-56% Fear of Heights**. Uncle Goober used to dangle the character by one foot, out of windows. Now the character is terrified of heights to the point of being frozen when above the second story. The character is fine as long as he can't see how high up he may be.

**57-63% Thinks He's Being Followed**. The character finds himself frequently glancing in mirrors, and stopping to look and see whether or not he's being followed. This includes checking behind himself, looking around, constant sideways glances, checking to see if doors are locked (checking the same doors 1D6 times each), and similar compulsive paranoid behavior. Note: The character is not paranoid in the sense that he thinks people are out to get him or are conspiring against him and is likely to have numerous trusted friends, he just has this constant feeling or anxiety that he is being watched.

**64-70% Fear of Success**. "Mom always said I wasn't any good." The character will sabotage himself at critical moments when things matter most. The following minuses apply during critical, or high pressure moments (battle, danger, watched by



others, etc.): -15% to all skills, -3 to strike, parry, initiative and damage.

**71-77% Psycho-Reliance (Luck Fixation).** The character becomes convinced that his “good fortune” is because of a particular item, a “lucky charm.” The character touches, taps or kisses the charm for good luck before entering into battle or tackling any difficult situation. If the character loses the item, he suffers the following penalties until the item is recovered or he can find a replacement “good luck” charm, which won’t be easy (this is all completely psychosomatic). **Penalties:** -5% on all skills, -3 to save vs Horror Factor, -3 on initiative and -1 on all combat moves. Any other coincidental misfortune will be attributed to the loss of the lucky charm.

**78-84% Personal Cleanliness:** Compulsive need to be clean. In fact, the character will wash his hands and face 2D4 times in a row before he “thinks” he is clean. He will also wash his clothes whenever he can, and bathes frequently. He hates being dirty or engaging in something that will make him dirty and tries to avoid it. Will change into clean clothes whenever he can and apologizes for being dirty or having a tiny stain on his clothes.

In the alternative, may hate dirty places and places filled with cobwebs, dust, filth, garbage/waste, smells of death and decay or which exhibit signs of vermin (roaches, mice, rats, spiders, other insects). He is distracted and off his game when forced to go into such places: -3 on initiative, -3 on Perception Rolls, and -5% skill penalty.

**85-91% Selective Traumatic Amnesia:** The character will not remember traumatic events (life threatening, life and death battle, extreme horror). He will function okay during the actual event, but will not remember it 15 minutes later. Can’t handle the stress and blocks it out. The character can hear about it like a third person without a problem, but will not personally remember the incident, his involvement or any details about it.

**92-00% Obsessive-Compulsive about Safety/Security.** Will check to see if a door is locked, a weapon is loaded, that he has his holy symbol(s), has cell phone/radio, I.D., and similar 1D6+2 times. May also insist that his teammates use identifying code words and signals to prove they are who they claim or seem to be.

## Psychosis Table

A psychosis is any severe mental disorder in which the person partially or completely withdraws from reality and becomes delusional. Psychotic behavior is often anti-social, violent or self-destructive.

**01-08% Fascination with death in all its forms.** The character examines and studies ways one can die and kill, as well as implements of death, how the human (and non-human) body reacts/responds to the threat of death/fear reactions, tolerance to pain, survival responses, and even the philosophical concepts of death, the soul, life after death and so on. It is interesting to note that the character is not afraid of death and is not morbid about it. He is simply fascinated by it. Others may find him to be disturbingly callous and ghoulish. Perhaps needless to say, this character finds zombies and Death Cults fascinating. Sinister and dangerous, but fascinating.

**09-16% Paranoid.** A general suspicion that everybody is out to get you, so therefore, nobody can be trusted. The character is a bit secretive and careful about what he says in front of whom, and keeps to himself. Does not trust strangers, suspects everyone of being a bandit, fears Retro-Savages, hates zombies, and loathes cultists.

**17-24% Manic Depressive.** Alternate severe depression one week (nobody loves him; he is a loser, incompetent and is going to die if he is not careful; -15% on all skills and reduce Perception Rolls and combat bonuses by half), followed by a manic episode the next week (everything is great, he is the best there is, life is grand! +10% on all skills, +2 on initiative, and all bonuses are normal).

**25-32% Paranoid Schizophrenic.** “They’re out to get me!” Voices tell the character that most everybody hates and/or fears him. Thus, he believes, “they” are out to get him (torture, kill, imprison, hurt, cheat, discredit, etc.). As a result, he has trouble sleeping (because he knows that would make him vulnerable to “them”), is constantly jumpy/nervous and is suspicious of others, sometimes even long-time friends. The character blames all of his misfortune on others and sees conspiracies everywhere. Tends to be a loner and distrusts everybody except his closest comrades. May believe the voices are a spirit guide, angel, or god, and anything in between.

**33-41% Overinclusion.** A mental perception in which the character draws irrational and irrelevant associations and conclusions from the facts (2+2 = 52). Once that conclusion has been reached, the character can’t let it go even if a mountain of evidence is provided to prove otherwise. This is the character’s view and he’s sticking to it (and will take the precautionary measures he deems necessary to combat and/or defend against it). A form of schizophrenia.

**42-50% Superman Syndrome.** The character thinks he is stronger, faster, smarter, and more handsome than anybody else. He tends to respect only brute strength, power and ruthlessness. As a result, the character accepts foolish challenges, takes dangerous risks and often underestimates his opponents or the chance of failure/defeat. If it is any consolation, the character is usually cheerful, helpful and positive.

**51-58% God Syndrome.** The character believes he is a divine being because the voices in his head tell him so. As such, the narcissistic character believes he is better than anyone else, and is above the law, judgement, and the comprehension of mere mortals. Consequently, he ignores rules and laws, may have questionable morals (depending on the alignment) and does as he pleases. The character is not necessarily mean about it, nor blatant or deliberate about breaking the law (though he can be), he just doesn’t see them as applying to him. The character will also refuse to pay the consequences when accused of wrongdoing and will feel cheated and unjustly persecuted if forced to pay.

The least offensive characters are cocky, arrogant, bossy, condescending and trivialize everything that does not directly involve them (they are the center of their universe). The most extreme believe they are truly deities and act accordingly as directed by their alignment. Some are reasonably benevolent gods while others are cruel, vengeful or malicious gods.

**59-66% Hysterical Aggressive Reaction.** The character reacts in anger and violence to one particular thing or occurrence. This “trigger” is usually a response to accusations and criticism about his appearance, courage, honor and virtue, such as being called a coward, sissy, wimp, cheater, ugly, stupid, crazy, etc. However, the reaction may also be a response to the actions of others that reminds the character of something that was traumatic in his own life (may tie in to other insanities). This can include things like a child being beaten, acts of torture or cruelty, seeing someone attacked by an animal, a particularly threatening monster, and so on.

In most cases, the character flies off the handle, ranting and raving like a lunatic, shoving, threatening or challenging his accuser or the perpetrator of the “trigger” action (e.g., “How would you like it if I slapped you around like that, punk?!”). The slightest act of antagonism, aggression or intolerance toward him, like pushing him away, a smart remark, ignoring him, etc., will send the character into a fury against whomever or whatever set him off.

**67-74%: Hysterical aggressive reaction to fear/phobia.** In this case, the “trigger” is something the character has a phobia about, except instead of cringing in fear, he lashes out to destroy the object of his fear. This is usually a tangible thing like spiders, snakes, a particular monster, etc. For example, a character with a phobia about insects sees an itty bitty ant crawling on the shelf behind the bar in a club. He’s likely to shout something like, “Oh my god! Look out! Get out of my way!” Then he leaps over the bar and swings at the ant with his beer bottle, chair, etc., shouting, “Did I get it? Did I get it? God, I hate those things!” Of course, in the process he may have caused a panic (after all, what is it that has frightened this person to such a degree?) or caused damage by his extreme actions.

If the phobia is something like a fear of the dark, he will fight anybody (to the death) who tries to put him someplace dark or who tries to take away his light, and he will do just about anything to get out of it. Likewise, a phobic character might turn to unreasonable behavior if confronted by his fear. Obviously, this can draw his fellow adventurers into some serious (and pointless) conflicts (and the reason why this phobia should not include very common things, like people).

**75-82%: Mindless Aggression.** Roll percentile dice again.

**01-94%: Semi-functional mindless aggression.** When frustrated, angry or upset, there is a 01-72% likelihood of going berserk and lashing out at anybody who gets in the way. The character pushes, beats and lashes out (stands and fights anybody who opposes him) until physically restrained, rendered unconscious or killed! It takes 3D4 minutes of restraint or unconsciousness before the character regains his composure.

**95-00%: Non-functional, homicidal maniac!** Continually going berserk at the slightest provocation as well as when frustrated, angry or upset. He fights to severely injure or kill those who upset or oppose him. The character must be confined constantly (or killed). He has only one lucid day a week during which time he appears completely normal and rational, and will probably spend his time trying to talk his way out of confinement.

**83-90%: Jekyll and Hyde.** The character hears a voice in his head and feels powerful emotions contrary to his original

alignment. There will be moments, especially when under stress, angry or drunk, that the voice speaks so loudly and convincingly that the character will respond to it. The response is the opposite of the character’s normal, original personality and can be frightening, as if he were a completely different person! When he returns to normal, the character may regret his actions and try to make restitution, but there is little he can do when his other personality takes over. This means if the character is a Principled or Scrupulous good character, his opposite Hyde persona will be one of the evil alignments. As a result, in the heat of combat, or under stress, the Hyde persona may surface and engage in acts of cruelty, intimidation, torture, belittlement of others, random homicidal violence, and so on.

**91-00%: Become a Psychiatrist.** The character thinks he is a psychiatrist and sees ordinary quirks, legitimate fears and concerns as affective disorders, psychosis, neurosis, phobia or obsession. They are all sick (even if only he can recognize this)! The character will try to help people by counseling them and offering his “expert” or “professional” services. Uses a lot of psychoanalytical methods which rely on free association, analysis of emotions and behavior, and speculation on motives and impulses. (“Hmm, that’s an interesting response. Did you resent your mother?”) In addition, he is especially fascinated with people who he considers extremely disturbed (i.e. have real insanities), but he cannot help himself, let alone anyone else.

## Random Phobia Table

- 01-03%** Contamination (germs, radioactive or otherwise; pathophobia).
- 04-06%** Pain (algophobia).
- 07-09%** Fire (pyrophobia).
- 10-12%** Places reputed to be haunted or domiciles to demons.
- 13-15%** Water (hydrophobia).
- 16-18%** Hospitals and ambulances.
- 19-21%** Bodies/corpses laying out in the open.
- 22-24%** Sewers, basements and other damp, dark places.
- 25-27%** Confining enclosures (claustrophobia).
- 28-29%** Blood (hematophobia).
- 30-32%** Cats (ailurophobia).
- 33-35%** A specific type of zombie.
- 36-37%** Reptiles, snakes and snake-like creatures (ophidiophobia).
- 38-40%** Police stations.
- 41-43%** Spiders and scorpions (arachnophobia).
- 44-46%** High places (acrophobia).
- 47-49%** Flying (by any means).
- 50-52%** Abandoned cars and trucks.
- 53-55%** Slimes and gooey substances.
- 56-58%** Darkness (nyctophobia).
- 59-61%** Female zombies.
- 62-64%** Open spaces (agoraphobia).
- 65-67%** Strangers and odd looking people (xenophobia).
- 68-70%** Being alone (monophobia).
- 71-73%** Insects (entomophobia).



74-76% Being touched (haphophobia)

77-79% Large dogs.

80-82% Anything related with the number 13 (triskaidekaphobia).

83-85% Chimeras; any amalgamations or unnatural combination of creatures and parts, including Crawler Zombies and zombies with objects sticking out of them.

86-87% Drugs, even medicine.

88-90% Bats and bat-like creatures (or rats or mice).

91-93% Lightning (including thunderstorms; astraphobia).

94-96% Crowds (ocholophobia).

97-98% The Wave or any hint that the Wave might be coming back, including any kind of mass contagion/illness.

99-00% Death Priests and the dark god they must worship.

**Note:** Characters who suffer from a phobia will become terrified when the object of their fear is encountered. If the character is surrounded by friends who can talk and soothe away his fears, the person may be able to contain himself long enough to safely avoid it (01-60% chance). However, the character feels faint, nauseous, and trembles while doing so (reduce attacks/actions per round, combat bonuses, skill performance and Spd by half; speed is at full only if the character is running away from the source of his fear/phobia).

If the character is alone, already nervous, or feels threatened, he will be overcome by fear. This is *phobic panic*.

**Phobic Panic:** Upon reaching the breaking point, the character's mind will defend itself by responding in one of the following ways:

**01-25%** Pass out/fall unconscious for 2D4 minutes.

**26-80%** Flee/run away at top speed! Panic-stricken, the character will ignore the outcries, pleas or needs of others, including his teammates. All the terrified person can think about is escaping. The character will run and run until he is certain he has escaped the object of his fear or until he is subdued and restrained. The person will fight only if there is no other way to escape, and then only until he can get away and run.

**81-00%** Paralyzed with fear, the character can only whimper, sob or scream as he faces the horror. Physically, the character stands completely rigid or huddled in a corner, immobilized with fear. He can not run, fight, use skills or move in any way (no attacks per melee) until the object of the fear is removed or destroyed, or he is dragged away from it.

**G.M. Note:** Dealing with the walking dead, bad guys and crazy survivors constantly puts the player characters into scary, gruesome, violent, horrifying, bizarre and deadly situations. But it is only the most horrifying and unexpected experiences that *may* create a phobia or other insanity. These characters are hardened to the sights, scenes, death, and ugliness of the Zombie Apocalypse.

## Random Obsession Table

**01-05% Opposite Sex:** The character either loves the opposite sex and puts that gender on a pedestal and tends to give them benefit of the doubt; or dislikes being around the opposite sex and tries to avoid them, sees them as trouble or the enemy, and assumes the worst of them.

**06-10% Secrecy:** Either prizes his secrecy above all else, or abhors even the thought of keeping a secret.

**11-15% Timeliness:** Either a fanatic about being on time or always late.

**16-20% Wealth/Money:** Either wants it or gives it away.

**21-25% High Technology:** Either loves to acquire and use it or loathes and avoids it.

**26-30% Zombies:** Either wants to find and destroy them or wants to avoid them whenever possible.

**31-35% Specific Object/Item or Animal:** Wants or hates it.

**36-40% Appearance:** A fashion plate or a slob.

**41-45% Danger:** Either loves the thrill of danger, which usually means throwing caution to the wind (the more deadly the better), or despises danger and is overly cautious; a jumpy worry wart.

**46-50% Food:** Covets and pays for only the finest foods and drink (complains about common or plain food; prefers not to eat it). Or eats any slop put down in front of him; the cheaper and nastier, the better.

**51-55% Alcohol:** Either a heavy drinker with a keen taste for the finest liquors, or a fanatical teetotaler.

**56-60% Specific Person:** Either desires that person's love, attention or friendship so much they will go to any lengths to impress them, or is obsessed with humiliating or bringing that person down or ruining them. Depending on their alignment,

even violence would be considered. This obsession typically involves somebody the character does not really know.

**61-65% Survivors.** Is either obsessed with helping them or avoiding them.

**66-70% Thinkers or Mock Zombies:** Is either fascinated by the creature and wants to observe and study it, or hates it and wants to destroy it, above all others, whenever encountered.

**71-75% Gambling:** Either loves it and bets on everything even when on a losing streak, or never bets on anything and looks down upon those who do.

**76-80% Sex or Romance:** Loves the idea of being in love and either wants love and romance (and probably looks for love in all the wrong places), or avoids romantic entanglement.

**81-85% Revenge:** The character is either driven to exact revenge for injustices and wrongdoings to innocent people and teammates (especially by zombies, cultists, Bandits and Retro-Savages), or is extremely forgiving, lets go of the past and firmly believes lust for revenge is a potential evil in and of itself and avoids it.

**86-90% Solitude:** Either loves peace and quiet, and being alone to the point of growing irrationally angry and frustrated if continually bothered or interrupted, especially during quiet times, or can't stand the thought of being left alone even for short periods of time.

**91-95% Crime-Busting or Zombie Killing:** If a good, Unprincipled or Aberrant alignment, the character loves to be a hero and is obsessed with stomping out crime and human predators (that includes Terror Cults, bandits and raiders) or protecting people from zombies, which means fighting them whenever possible and going on killing runs. If Anarchist, Miscreant or Diabolic, the character likes to think of himself as a criminal mastermind and engages in criminal activity and undermining law and order whenever he can, or thinks he is smarter than Death Priests, cultists, bandits and raiders, and works to use, trick, sabotage, undermine or destroy them whenever possible, even if it causes trouble for his teammates or Safe Haven Community.

**96-00% Power/Leadership:** Either craves power and wants to be a leader of others, or could not care less and prefers to be a follower (even if cheering throngs of people are calling out for him to lead them).

**Note:** Obsessions are either an intense, irrational love/desire of something or an intense hatred/loathing of it. The former is likely to motivate the obsessed person to obtain the object of his desire while the latter is likely to cause the character to avoid or destroy it. The G.M. can decide which is most appropriate under the circumstances or roll percentile dice to see which way the obsession manifests itself (50%/50% between love and hatred). Obsessive characters typically will go to almost any length to satisfy their irrational feelings.

## Cures for Insanity

**1. Affective Disorders & Neuroses:** Therapy and counseling by a psychologist. Requires a minimum of three months of therapy with the following results:

01-29%: No effect; requires longer therapy (roll again in another three months).

30-69%: Half cured. The character feels the occasional return of the old neurosis or disorder when under stress; 01-48% chance.

70-00%: Total cure! The insanity is gone.

**2. Curing Psychoses:** Therapy and possible use of hypnosis and drugs are known to control mood swings, depression, schizophrenia, paranoia and stress. Treatment by a psychologist requires 4D4 months of therapy with the following results:

01-33%: No effect; requires another six months of therapy to roll again.

34-68%: Psychosis is replaced by a phobia (this could be an improvement).

69-00%: Total cure.

**3. Curing Phobias and Obsessions:** There is no known cure for these conditions, but prolonged or repeated exposure to the object of one's fears in a controlled environment, along with counseling, can lessen the intensity of the fear, making it less irrational and manageable (scared but can still function). Treatment by a psychologist requires 1D4 months of therapy, with the following results:

01-39%: No effect; requires 1D4 more months of therapy.

40-88%: Fear is lessened so that the character can function normally, but still does not like the object of the phobia – ugh!

89-00%: Fear is intensified so that there is a 50% likelihood that the character will become completely paralyzed until the source of the fear is removed or the person is physically removed from its location.

## Addiction

The character drinks or uses drugs to get high because he *must*. He is ill, cannot tell when he's had too much, and craves booze or drugs more than anything else in the world. Though there are always "triggers" that entice the addict to get high (failure, fear, a rainy day, a sunny day, seeing others drinking, seeing a razor blade or needle, etc.), they are not the true reasons. The individual is sick. Counseling, therapy and abstinence are the only means of fighting addiction and staying clean and sober.

### Personality Modification while Intoxicated

**01-10% Argumentative,** mean, hostile, strong; +2 to damage.

**11-20% Quick temper,** emotional, aggressive; +1 on initiative, -1 to parry or dodge.

**21-30% Impulsive,** takes risks and does foolish, potentially dangerous things (for him or those around him); +1 on initiative.

**31-40% Quiet,** laid back, withdrawn, wants to be left alone. -4 on initiative and Perception Rolls, -3 to strike, parry, dodge, and all combat moves, -5% on all skills.

**41-50% Paranoid,** trusts no one, wants to be left alone.

**51-60% Sobbing drunk/junkie.** Sad, depressed, and overly sentimental, breaking out in tears at the drop of a hat; -5% on all skills, -3 on initiative and Perception Rolls.

**61-70% Overconfident** and cocky while intoxicated. May be quick to accept a challenge or try to show off; -5% on all

skills and -2 on initiative and Perception Rolls, -1 to strike, parry, dodge and pull punch.

**71-75% Loud** and verbally belligerent; -5% on all skills and -1 on all combat moves.

**76-85% Disoriented;** has difficulty following movement, conversation or what's going on around him. No initiative (last to take action), no Perception, -4 to strike, parry, dodge, and perform any combat moves, reduce attacks per melee round and Spd by half, and -50% on skill performance.

**86-90% Hyper,** always moving, distracted, wants to dance, sing and have fun; -2 on initiative and Perception Rolls.

**91-95% Hallucinations/Delirium.** Reality slips into fantasy. The character goes through periods lasting 1D10 minutes where he cannot tell fantasy and hallucinations from reality. May think a monster is a person or an old friend, may think a friend is a monster, may think he is being threatened when he is not, see something frightening (and responds accordingly) when there is nothing to be afraid of, think he is someplace else in the world or in another reality, and may be influenced by suggestions and things he sees on TV or hears on the radio or in conversation, etc. ("Get down. Get down! They're bombing us! Bin Ladin's here . . . the terrorists are . . .") -2 on all combat moves, Perception cannot be trusted, and -5 to save vs Hypnotic Suggestion, mind control, illusions and other forms of mental manipulation.

**96-00% Super Syndrome.** Believes he/she can do anything when intoxicated. +5% on all skills when intoxicated, but -1 on Perception Rolls and all combat moves. **Note:** -10% on skills when sober, because the character believes he can't be his best unless he's been drinking or using drugs.

### Totally Wasted (Staggering Drunk)

When totally wasted/drunk/higher than a kite, the character loses control of his motor functions, staggers when he walks, and can barely concentrate enough to have a semi-lucid conversation (fades out in mid-sentence, repeats the same stuff over and over, talks incoherently, mumbles, memory loss/can't find his car, etc.).

Penalties when Wasted: -75% on skill performance (and it takes 1D4 times longer to perform), *no* bonuses for combat, -10 on Perception and initiative, and reduce the number of attacks per melee round and Spd attribute to *two*.

### Withdrawal Symptoms

Addiction/Alcoholism can be cured, but requires a dedicated willingness to give up the substance and seek aid, abstinence from all drugs/alcohol, therapy and ongoing support (AA, NA, and so on).

**First Week:** -20% on all skills, no initiative or Perception Roll bonuses, -2 to strike, parry, dodge and all other combat maneuvers, and reduce speed and the number of attacks per melee by half. Feels very sick, shaky, insecure, and agitated. 01-65% chance of going back to drinking/drugs if they are readily available.

**Second Week:** -10% on all skills, -2 on initiative and Perception Rolls; -1 to strike, parry, dodge, etc., reduce Spd by 20% and attacks per melee are -1. Still shaky, insecure, craves

the drug of choice. 01-55% chance will fall back to drugs/drinking if the opportunity is there.

**Third through Sixth Week:** -1 on initiative and Perception Rolls, -5% on skill performance. Feeling strong and more secure, but also guilty for past deeds and angry at self. 01-55% chance will fall back to drugs/drinking if the opportunity is there.

**The Next Six Months:** Now is the ongoing battle to *stay* dry/clean of drugs and booze. It's a lot tougher than most people can ever imagine. 01-40% chance will fall back to drugs/drinking if the opportunity is there; +15% if under extreme pressure or anxiety. Roll for each pressure situation, such as near death experience (of self or friend), major failure, crucial situation relying heavily or entirely on the addict, and so on.

**After Those Six Months:** 01-15% chance will fall back to drugs/drinking if the opportunity is there, but +15% if under extreme pressure, and +10% if the character has stopped going to at least monthly (if not weekly or bi-weekly) meetings or therapy sessions, and +20% if the addict "tries" even one hit of a drug or drinks one glass of booze. Modifiers are accumulative. This is the way it is for the rest of his life. Roll for each pressure situation. **Note:** A character can attempt to beat an addiction, regardless of numerous past failures.

## Combat Rules

The Palladium combat system is relatively simple, quick and realistic. It has been thoroughly play tested, tweaked, and improved for years with great success. It is designed to be fast-playing and easy to understand. All combat moves (strikes, parries, dodges, etc.) are resolved by rolling a *twenty-sided die* (1D20).

### STEP 1: Determine Initiative

Any time opponents square off for battle, the Game Master must determine who has the initiative. In other words, who will attack first. A successful *Sneak Attack* or *Long-Range Attack* will always have initiative for that melee round (15 seconds). Humans always have initiative over *Slouchers*. Otherwise, whoever *rolls highest* on a twenty-sided die will attack first. In the case of a tie, re-roll. Initiative is rolled only once per melee round. That roll will determine the pace for the entire melee (15 seconds).

### STEP 2: Attacker Rolls to Strike

The next step is for the first attacker to **roll a twenty-sided die**. If the result is a four or less (counting bonuses), the attacker misses. *Any roll above a four will hit the opponent*, unless the defender can parry or dodge the attack.

### Body Armor

Any type of natural (monsters and animals) or artificial body armor *will* have an A.R. (Armor Rating).

**Against artificial armor,** the attack roll – the roll to strike – must be higher than the A.R. to hit the actual character protected by the armor. Rolling under or equal to the A.R. strikes, but

does damage only to the armor itself (subtract damage from the S.D.C. of the *armor*), not the person in the body armor. That is a good thing in that it is whittling down the armor protection, but the opponent remains uninjured, on his feet, able to strike back and do other things. **For example:** Studded leather armor or a light bulletproof vest has an A.R. of 13, this means the attacker must roll 14 or higher to penetrate the armor and inflict damage directly to his foe's body (deduct damage first from the physical S.D.C. of the body, and when that is reduced to zero, deduct damage from Hit Points). In this case, a roll of 5-13 would strike, unless parried, but would only inflict damage to the *body armor* (reduce the S.D.C. of the armor accordingly). When all the S.D.C. of the armor is destroyed (reduced to zero), the armor is so tattered that it no longer provides any protection (no A.R. and no S.D.C.). After that point, any attacks that are five or higher will strike and do damage to the character's body, unless they are parried or dodged. A roll of 1-4 is always a miss; that's true in hand to hand and long-range combat.

**Natural A.R.** applies to zombies and some animals. In this case, any roll to strike that is under the creature's A.R. may hit but it does *no damage!* Only by rolling a strike that is higher than the Natural A.R. does the attack inflict damage (first to the physical S.D.C., and when the S.D.C. is gone, to the Hit Points).

A roll of 1-4 to strike is always a *miss*.

A roll of a **Natural 20** is always a hit and a Critical Strike (double damage), unless the defender also rolls a Natural 20.

Ultimately, combat continues back and forth until one side or the other surrenders (assuming his adversary will accept a surrender and take prisoners) or is slain.

### STEP 3: Defender May Parry, Dodge or Entangle

Any time an attacker rolls a successful strike to hit, the defender can choose to parry, dodge, *or* entangle.

**Parrying** can be done automatically (without using an attack) by anyone trained in any form of hand to hand combat. A parry *blocks* the attacker's strike, preventing damage from being inflicted. *For example,* a punch can be blocked by the character's hands or arms. A weapon attack (sword, axe, mace, etc.) can be parried/blocked by a shield, sword, or another object held in the defender's hand. A weapon should only be parried with another object. Trying to parry a weapon with one's hand or arm is likely to result in a failed parry and the usual amount of damage being inflicted by the weapon. Parrying a weapon bare-handed is dangerous and all such attempts are *without* benefit of the character's parry bonuses.

A parry can be performed by those with combat training without using up a melee attack/action. Characters with no hand to hand combat training lose their next melee attack every time they parry.

Defending by dodging or entangling means automatically giving up the next melee attack. **Entangle** means the character actually pins or snares an opponent's weapon(s) or arm. A **dodge** means the character physically moves out of the path of the attack. Each dodge uses up one of the character's own attacks per melee round. So constantly dodging means the defender has no opportunity to attack. Only characters with the

ability to *automatic dodge* can attempt a dodge (roll to dodge like always) without using up one of their own attacks. An automatic dodge is like a parry in that regard – it can be performed without loss of a melee attack. Rare among humans, it may be an ability of a creature or zombie.

**Note:** The defender can only defend against attacks within his *line of vision*. Attacks from the rear or which are not seen coming cannot be parried, dodged or entangled. The defender always wins ties when parrying, entangling or dodging.

### STEP 4: Attacker Rolls Damage

If the roll to strike is successful, it hits and does damage. Human fisticuffs will inflict the normal punch damage (typically 1D4) plus any damage bonuses from a high P.S. attribute and/or Hand to Hand Combat and Physical skills like Boxing.

If a handheld weapon is used such as a knife, club, chair, etc., the attack inflicts the weapon damage *plus* damage bonuses from hand to hand combat skills and a high P.S. attribute. All bonuses are cumulative, so if the character has a P.S. of 20 he adds +5 to the damage he inflicts with his weapon, punches or kicks. If he is using a weapon that is also +2 to damage, the weapon's bonus is added to the damage. And perhaps he also gains +2 from his hand to hand combat skill. Thus the total amount of potential damage inflicted in this example is the



weapon, say 2D6, +9 from cumulative bonuses (x2 if a Critical Strike).

**Critical Strikes** do *double damage!* Combined Critical Strikes, like a Natural Twenty and a jump attack, do triple damage. Add the damage bonus to the roll before doubling or tripling damage. A Natural (unmodified) Twenty is always a Critical Strike. **Note:** A normal human punch inflicts 1D4 damage; a normal kick 1D8. W.P.s will list weapon damage.

A **pulled punch**, whether with fist or melee weapon, inflicts as little damage as the attacker desires (down to one point), provided he was successful to strike and rolled an 11 or better on a 1D20. A failed attempt to *pull* a punch means full damage, bonus and all, has been inflicted. A gun cannot be “pulled” and the blast inflicts its usual damage.

## STEP 5: Defender May Attempt to Roll with Impact

If the attack is a physical impact from things like a punch, kick, club, mace, hammer, staff, thrown rock, fall, explosion, and similar, the defender can attempt to *roll with the impact*. In order to roll with the impact, the defender must roll 1D20 and *match* or better the attacker’s roll to strike. Successfully rolling with impact means the character takes *half* damage! Successfully rolling with a *knockout punch* means the character takes double damage, but is NOT knocked unconscious or stunned. Rolling with a *Death Blow punch* results in the loss of half of all remaining S.D.C., or Hit Points if S.D.C. is less than 12. Failing to roll with impact means the character has used up one of his melee actions/attacks and still takes full damage from his attacker. Roll with impact counts as one melee action/attack.

## Combat Sequence

The typical combat sequence goes like this:

**Step One:** Everybody rolls for initiative. The character with the highest initiative roll strikes first, the ones next in line follow in descending order.

**Step Two:** The one with initiative rolls to strike a particular opponent and adds in any strike bonuses he may have.

**Step Three:** The character under attack can attempt to roll a parry or dodge. The high roll wins. Defender always wins ties.

**Step Four:** If the strike successfully hits, roll for damage and deduct it from the character’s S.D.C., and when S.D.C. is gone, damage is deducted from Hit Points. **Note:** If an opponent is wearing body armor, determine if the strike penetrates the armor (A.R.) and roll damage dice. Deduct damage from the armor if the roll is less than or equal to the A.R. number, or the physical body if the roll to strike is higher than the A.R. number.

*Option to parry* (or dodge) in hand to hand combat. If successfully parried, no damage is inflicted and the defender readies himself to counter-strike. If the parry fails and the character takes damage, he *may* opt to *roll with impact*, but to do so will count as one of his melee actions/attacks.

**Step Five: Now it’s the defender’s time to return the attack:** The character who was under attack follows Steps 2-4, striking back (roll to strike), and his opponent may try to parry or dodge, then determine whether or not damage is inflicted (and how much) and repeat the process.

One on one melee combat goes back and forth like this for the entire melee round; first one strikes and one parries, then the other strikes and so forth. The melee round ends when each character has used up all of his attacks.

**Next melee round:** Start again by having everybody roll for initiative (step one) and repeat steps 2-5. This continues until one set of combatants is triumphant over the other. This can be when one side or the other are all slain, surrender, are captured or flee.

**Note:** The description always seems to make combat *sound* more complicated than it really is. In game play it is a fast, back and forth, the first guy (the one who won initiative) strikes, the defender parries or dodges, damage is rolled if struck, and then it is the defender’s turn to strike. The opponent, in turn, can try to parry or dodge (or just take the damage) and then strikes back. The defender parries, dodges or stands and takes the damage, and then strikes back. Simple.

Oh, if one fighter has *more* attacks per melee than the other guy, this back and forth combat continues until the one with more attacks has the advantage. At that point the one who is out of attacks can only try to *parry* the incoming attacks from his opponent. He may opt to *dodge*, but each dodge takes away one of his attacks from the *next* melee round, leaving him in an even worse situation until soon, all he may be able to do is run and dodge, which can happen. Watch a boxing match, the boxer who is faster will throw more punches (attempts to strike) than a slower or less experienced opponent. When both combatants have used up all their attacks that melee round is over and the next one begins. A melee round lasts approximately 15 seconds in fictional game time, but can last several minutes in real, player time, especially if the player group is large.

## Spreading out combat among several pairs of fighters

Most gaming groups have 3-6 players, all of whom are likely to be matched up against their own adversary at the same time. That’s 3-6 pairs of fighters in the same melee round. Some Game Masters play out the entire melee combat between one set of fighters (i.e., one NPC villain vs one player character) and then move on to the next player. This can work out okay, especially since the initiative roll determines who goes first, second, third, and so on. HOWEVER, I find this approach is often *anti-climactic*, dull and boring for the rest of the players waiting their turn.

**Instead**, I *hop* from one set of combatants to the next, trying to leave the most dramatic or decisive clash for last. This means I let the first villain and player character take a whack or two at each other (i.e., one or two melee attacks), and say something like, “okay, you guys are going at it hot and heavy,” or, “you’re holding your own for now.” Then I turn to the *next player* to give him a turn, “The madman you’re facing screams and charges, what do you do?” Inevitably he parries or strikes or dodges and his combat is engaged. I let one or two melee attacks unfold, put him on pause, and turn to the next player and repeat.

**This creates a sensation of simultaneous action for all the players.** And psychologically, because each player is *waiting* for their next turn while watching the rest of the *team* fight, it creates a sense of anticipation, excitement and camaraderie.

Likewise, if the character's teammates are doing well, it makes each individual player more anxious for his next turn to do just as well or better. If his teammates are doing poorly, it creates a sense of concern and immediacy that *he* must vanquish his foe to *help* his buddy(s). Wow, when done right, the action is pulse-pounding and even heart-stopping at pivotal intervals.

Use this *pause, switch, return method* along with *cliffhanger suspense* to build up to a satisfying *climax*. For example, as one of the free player characters, having vanquished his adversary, looks on, he sees one of his teammates losing his fight. Things look bad.

The free character tells the Game Master that he is running over to help his buddy or taking aim at his buddy's opponent. The G.M. says, okay, but seems to otherwise ignore him, or says something like, "okay, you're charging over there (or taking aim), but in the meanwhile . . ."

The G.M. turns to the player whose character is under brutal attack and faring poorly. The G.M. allows another exchange between the villain/monster and the beleaguered player character; after all, one melee attack and counterattack takes only two or three seconds.

If played out right, the *free character* is shouting, "I leap at the villain," or "I strike with my sword," or "I shoot. I shoot!" But the G.M., still looking at the beleaguered character, says, "The villain, caught in a blood fever, doesn't see or hear the free character. All he can think about is finishing you off. He raises his club (or takes aim, or whatever) and . . ."

And *that's when* the G.M. turns to the free character and says to the player, "roll to strike." Cool, huh? Very dramatic.

Of course, it should be orchestrated so that the beleaguered character still has a parry or dodge option or a chance to strike should his teammate's attack miss or not finish the villain off. Likewise, give the down and out character other options. **For example**, "you hit," says the G.M. to the free character. "Surprised and enraged, the villain/zombie turns to face *you*" – or swings to fire a quick shot at the free character. Maybe the villain is staggered and ready to go down, but is so crazed with battle-rage he is fighting to the death. Or now the free character, surprised by how quick and, perhaps, how devastating the villain's attack on him was, is the one in trouble. Ah, but here's the coup de grace, the beleaguered character has been forgotten, giving him a *free shot* at the bad guy! An attack that might be the last blast needed to finish the fiend off, or now facing both player characters, the two finish him off together, or the villain runs away (or tries to). However it turns out, there is a sense of *camaraderie, drama* and *triumph* that ends in a climactic and rousing way. I've actually had the rest of the group cheer when the down and out character delivers the final blow or the bad guy runs off with his tail between his legs. It's all about pacing and presenting the action in a dynamic way.

Remember, you, as the Game Master, are much more than a referee or the voice of a faceless bad guy, you *orchestrate* everything. It's your job to set up the action to deliver the most punch. Not manipulate and force the action, but to *arrange* and *orchestrate* how it all goes down. – *Kevin Siembieda*



## Two against one

More often than not, two or more player characters will gang up on one superhuman opponent. Whatever the case, the "one" will find himself dividing his attacks between his multiple attackers, perhaps first striking the closest or who is doing the most damage and then the other. However, use logic, if one of the multiple attackers is doing more damage than the others, or represents the greatest threat, then the "one" may repeatedly direct all or most of his attacks at that opponent while ignoring the others.

The "one" can try to *parry* incoming attacks from as many as three adversaries, but a fourth attacker gets a free shot (no parry for the "one" on that attack). However, the "one" can only return his next attack at one of his opponents, which is why his counterattacks must, ultimately, be divided. (I'll hit the ugly Crawler this time – parry, parry, parry – and hit the Sloucher next time.) Depending on how the battle goes, the "one's" strategy and targets may change, and at some point he may need to call for help or abandon the fight and try to run away.

## Hand to Hand Combat

These are the standard level by level tables that present the *accumulative bonuses* offered by the common forms of hand to hand fighting. When characters advance a level, the player can come to this section to see what new bonuses apply to the character.

**Note:** ALL bonuses are accumulative. That means each new level offers new bonuses and combat capabilities that are *added* to those previously acquired. Certain Hand to Hand fighting styles also impart bonuses to one's physical attributes as well as perfection of the fighting form. Also see Boxing and Wrestling in the *Skills* section.

**Number of attacks per melee:** To simplify matters, each type of Hand to Hand Combat indicates the number of attacks the character starts with, typically four.



## Characters with

### No Hand to Hand Combat Skill

**Level 1:** Starts with one hand to hand attack per melee round. This reflects the character's pitiful fighting skills.

HOWEVER, the character gets *TWO non-combat melee actions* at first level. A *non-combat action* involves some activity other than fighting (operating a machine, driving, locking a door, running, hiding, helping others, etc.).

**Level 3:** +1 attack per melee round and +1 to dodge. +1 *non-combat melee action*.

**Level 6:** +2 *non-combat melee actions*.

**Level 9:** +1 attack per melee round, for a total of three "attacks" per round (each attack counts as two melee *actions* for this character). +1 *non-combat melee action* for a total of six melee "actions." That's it.

### Hand to Hand: Basic

This is an elementary form of hand to hand combat training. Though it hardly stacks up against some of the more advanced forms of fighting, one who has trained in Hand to Hand: Basic still fights with combat skill compared to the simple, everyday folk without training.

**Note:** Basic combat training enables the character to use any basic/common attacks, including Punch, Elbow, Kick, Knee, Disarm, Dodge, Entangle, Body Block/Tackle, Body Flip/Throw, Roll with Impact, Power Punch (but not a Power Kick) and Pull Punch – but *no* special moves or martial art attacks such as Automatic Dodge, Back Flip, Holds, Karate Punches, Leap Kick or other moves.

**Level 1:** Starts with four attacks/actions per melee round; +2 to pull punch and +2 to roll with punch, fall or impact.

**Level 2:** +2 to parry and dodge.

**Level 3:** Kick attack does 1D8 points of damage.

**Level 4:** +1 additional attack/action per melee round.

**Level 5:** +1 to strike and disarm.

**Level 6:** Critical Strike on an unmodified roll of 19 or 20.

**Level 7:** +2 to damage.

**Level 8:** Judo-style body flip/throw; does 1D6 damage, and victim loses initiative and one attack.

**Level 9:** +1 additional attack/action per melee round.

**Level 10:** +2 to pull punch and +2 to roll with impact/punch/fall.

**Level 11:** +1 to parry and dodge.

**Level 12:** +1 to strike.

**Level 13:** Critical Strike or knockout from behind.

**Level 14:** +2 to damage.

**Level 15:** +1 additional attack/action per melee round.

### Hand to Hand: Expert

This is the fighting style taught to police officers, soldiers, bodyguards, thieves, and anybody else who will be expected to live by violence. While it lacks the mastery of Martial Arts, an Expert fighter knows how to scrap quickly and efficiently. At

high levels, especially, those with this skill can often hold their own against dedicated masters of the martial arts.

**Note:** Expert combat training enables the character to use any basic/common attacks, including Punch, Elbow, Kick, Knee, Disarm, Dodge, Entangle, Body Block/Tackle, Body Flip/Throw, Roll with Impact, Power Punch, Power Kick, and Pull Punch and even some martial arts moves (as noted below) – but unless noted below the character does *not* have special moves or martial art attacks such as Automatic Dodge, Back Flip, Holds, Karate Punches, Leap Kick or other moves.

**Level 1:** Starts with four attacks/actions per melee; kick attack 1D8 damage, +2 to pull punch, and +2 to roll with punch, fall or impact.

**Level 2:** +3 to parry and dodge, and +1 to pull punch.

**Level 3:** +2 to strike, +2 to disarm, and can perform a Karate Punch.

**Level 4:** +1 additional attack/action per melee round.

**Level 5:** Can perform a Karate Kick, does 2D6 damage.

**Level 6:** Critical Strike on an unmodified roll of 18, 19 or 20.

**Level 7:** W.P. Paired Weapons and backhand strike (average, does 1D4 damage).

**Level 8:** Body flip/throw; does 1D6 damage, and victim loses initiative and one attack.

**Level 9:** +1 additional attack/action per melee and +1 to disarm.

**Level 10:** +3 to damage.

**Level 11:** Knockout/stun on an unmodified roll of 18, 19 or 20.

**Level 12:** +2 to parry and dodge.

**Level 13:** Critical Strike or knockout from behind (triple damage).

**Level 14:** +1 additional attack/action per melee round.

**Level 15:** Death Blow on a roll of Natural 20.

### Hand to Hand: Martial Arts

A form of martial arts that takes and mixes techniques from many different sources.

**Note:** Martial Arts combat training enables the character to use any basic/common attacks, including Punch, Elbow, Kick, Knee, Disarm, Dodge, Entangle, Body Block/Tackle, Body Flip/Throw, Roll with Impact, Power Punch, Power Kick, and Pull Punch as well as the martial arts moves noted below.

**Level 1:** Starts with four attacks/actions per melee; +3 to pull punch and +3 to roll with impact/punch/fall, and body flip/throw; does 1D6 damage, victim loses initiative and one attack.

**Level 2:** +3 to parry and dodge; +2 to strike, and may perform Karate and any *hand* strike/punch.

**Level 3:** +1 on initiative, and may perform a Karate-style kick (does 2D6 damage) and any foot strike except leap kick.

**Level 4:** +1 additional attack/action per melee round.

**Level 5:** Leap kick (3D8 damage, but counts as two melee attacks), and +2 to entangle.

**Level 6:** Critical Strike on an unmodified roll of 18, 19 or 20.

**Level 7:** W.P. Paired Weapons, can perform Holds and is +2 to disarm.

**Level 8:** Back flip and back flip escape.

**Level 9:** +1 additional attack/action per melee round.

**Level 10:** Back flip attack and +2 to disarm.

**Level 11:** +4 to damage and +1 on initiative.

**Level 12:** +2 to parry and dodge.

**Level 13:** Knockout/stun on an unmodified roll of 18, 19 or 20.

**Level 14:** +1 additional attack/action per melee round.

**Level 15:** Death Blow on a roll of a Natural 20.

## Hand to Hand: Assassin

This style of fighting is a specialized science of killing generally taught by secret organizations such as organized crime cartels, secret government “wet working” bureaus, military black ops, and so on.

**Note:** Assassin combat training enables the character to use any basic/common attacks, including Punch, Elbow, Kick, Knee, Disarm, Dodge, Entangle, Body Block/Tackle, Body Flip/Throw, Roll with Impact, Power Punch, Power Kick, and Pull Punch and even many martial art moves (as noted below) – but unless noted below the character does *not* have special martial art moves.

**Level 1:** Starts with three attacks/actions per melee round. +2 to strike. W.P. Paired Weapons.

**Level 2:** +1 on initiative and +2 additional attacks/actions per melee round.

**Level 3:** Karate Punch (2D4 damage), +3 to pull punch, and +2 to roll with impact/punch/fall.

**Level 4:** Karate Kick (2D6 damage), +4 to damage on all physical attacks, and +1 on initiative.

**Level 5:** +1 additional attack/action per melee round and +1 to strike with a thrown weapon.

**Level 6:** +3 to parry/dodge, +2 to entangle and backhand strike (martial arts 1D6).

**Level 7:** Knockout/stun on an unmodified roll of 17-20 and leap kick (3D8 damage, but counts as two melee attacks).

**Level 8:** +1 additional attack/action per melee round, +1 to strike with guns, and +1 on initiative.

**Level 9:** +1 on initiative and can perform back flip.

**Level 10:** Critical Strike on an unmodified roll of 19 or 20.

**Level 11:** +2 to strike in hand to hand, +1 to strike with a thrown weapon and with guns, and can perform back flip attack.

**Level 12:** +2 to pull punch and Death Blow on a roll of a Natural 19 or 20.

**Level 13:** +1 additional attack/action per melee round.

**Level 14:** +2 to damage and can perform Holds.

**Level 15:** +2 to strike in hand to hand and +1 to strike with guns.

## Hand to Hand: Commando

This style of combat is a quick and dirty form of martial arts typically available only to the members of the military, and even

then only to special operation teams such as Commandos, Navy Seals, Special Forces and Military Specialists.

**Note:** Commando combat training enables the character to use any basic/common attacks, including Punch, Elbow, Kick, Knee, Disarm, Dodge, Entangle, Body Block/Tackle, Body Flip/Throw, Roll with Impact, Power Punch, Power Kick, and Pull Punch and even many martial arts moves (as noted below) – but unless noted below the character does *not* have special martial art moves.

**Level 1:** Starts with four attacks/actions per melee round, W.P. Paired Weapons, body flip/throw, body block/tackle and +2 to save vs Horror Factor.

**Level 2:** +1 on initiative, +1 to strike, +2 to parry and dodge, +3 to roll with punch/fall/impact, and +3 to pull punch. Backward sweep kick, used only against opponents coming up behind the character. Does no damage; it is purely a knockdown attack (same penalties as body flip) but cannot be parried (an opponent can try to dodge it but is -2 to do so).

**Level 3:** +1 on initiative, +1 to disarm, and Karate Punch/strike (does 2D4 damage).

**Level 4:** +1 additional attack/action per melee and Karate Kick (does 2D6). The Karate-style kick starts with bringing the knee, folded, up to chest level, then the foot is completely extended.

**Level 5:** +2 to automatic dodge and all foot strikes.

**Level 6:** +2 on initiative, +1 to strike, parry and dodge, and +1 to body flip/throw.

**Level 7:** +2 to damage, +1 to save vs Horror Factor, +1 to disarm, +1 to automatic dodge and +2 to pull punch.

**Level 8:** +1 additional attack per melee, jump kick, +2 to body flip/throw, and +1 to roll with punch/fall/impact.

**Level 9:** Death Blow on a Natural 18-20! +2 to pull punch.

**Level 10:** +2 to save vs Horror Factor, +1 on initiative and +1 to strike.

**Level 11:** +1 to disarm, +1 to pull punch and +2 to body flip/throw.

**Level 12:** +2 to damage, +1 to parry and dodge, +2 to automatic dodge.

**Level 13:** +1 additional attack/action per melee.

**Level 14:** Can perform Holds and is +1 on initiative.

**Level 15:** Critical Strike on a Natural 17-20.

## Horror Factor

All walking dead, monsters and supernatural creatures have a *Horror Factor (H.F.)*. The Horror Factor represents either the hideous appearance or its overwhelming aura of evil and power, or a combination of the two. Whenever a human/mortal encounters one of these terrors, the character must roll a 20-sided die (1D20) to see whether or not he or she is momentarily stunned by the sheer horror of the thing. This Horror Factor roll might be thought of as a *saving throw* or mental parry. Fortunately, the character only needs to roll for the first melee round of each encounter, *not* every melee of combat.

**To save vs Horror Factor (H.F.):** Just like a parry, the roll must be equal to or higher than the creature’s Horror Factor.

there is something bizarre or repulsive associated with the encounter (perhaps something involving Death Cults).

## Perception Rolls

This type of roll uses the same mechanics as combat, Horror Factor, and saving throws. **Perception Rolls** are used to simulate the character's five senses (sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch) in situations where noticing something might be important or relevant. Searching a room, standing watch, listening through a door, peering into night-shrouded underbrush to see what might be lurking there; these are all situations where a Perception Roll might be called for.

To determine whether the character's Perception finds something, the player must roll a 20-sided die (D20). Add Perception Roll bonuses one might have from *Occupation* and *O.C.C.* (if any), and then match the roll to the situation.

### Perception Table by Difficulty

The table below indicates the number a character has to roll to correctly *perceive* or notice whatever it is he's looking for or is alert to notice.

**4 or Better: An Easy Situation Circumstance.** Hearing a loud noise, finding a bright-colored object against a white background, finding something hastily and/or poorly hidden; and similar.

**8 or Better: Moderate.** Looking for something or somebody in a well-lit area; hearing a slight noise; finding something hidden without great thought; and similar.

**14 or better: Challenging.** Looking for something in poor light, fog, in murky water, or under desperate circumstances (it's an emergency or the seeker is impaired); hearing something over a noisy background or moving or speaking quietly; finding something carefully concealed, camouflaged or masked; and so on.

**17 or Better: Difficult.** Finding something in the dark or masterfully hidden/concealed, hearing something over a loud din or moving silent as the wind (like a snake sliding over a carpet); noticing an enemy (or friend) or something or somebody that doesn't belong amongst great confusion, debris, a large crowd or much activity.

### Perception that you are being followed or watched by something or someone threatening or evil

This is a gut feeling, hunch or premonition of danger that Game Masters should allow only on a rare basis. And probably only if the player says his character is looking around, or the situation is such that you, the G.M., want to give him (or the group) a chance of recognizing the threat/danger scant moments before it strikes.

15 or better to sense a zombie or lesser danger.

**17 or better to sense a cunning, stealthy and more dangerous foe.**

**19 or better to sense an immediate threat.**

**Perception Rolls vs Stealth & Concealment Skills:** A number of skills, among them *Prowl*, *Detect Ambush*, *Detect Con-*



**For example:** A Flesh-Eating Zombie with a Horror Factor of 13, leaps out from a dumpster in an alley. All characters who see it must roll to save against *horror*. In this case, a successful save is 13 or higher. Everybody but poor Thom rolls above a 13 and saves. Thom rolls a nine, so his character is *momentarily* stunned with horror.

A **failed roll** means the character is so overwhelmed that he is temporarily stunned. In game terms this means the character loses initiative (don't even roll for it), loses one attack/melee action, and cannot defend himself (no parry or dodge) against the creature's *first* attack of that melee round. Fortunately, the character snaps out of the shocked stupor quickly and can join in the combat that same melee. By the second melee round, the character has completely recovered his senses and is functioning as normal; roll for initiative and continue combat as usual.

**G.M. Note:** If you think it is appropriate, you may also assign a Horror Factor to a *situation* (gathering of cultists engaged in ritual sacrifice, a scene of torture, a brutal murder, etc.) or an *environment* (an especially spooky, creepy, or alien environment).

**Note:** Some O.C.C.s and other considerations may provide a character with a bonus to save vs Horror Factor, so make sure you include all such bonuses and add them to your roll to save vs H.F. Furthermore, by second level, Survivors, Reapers and other post-Zombie Apocalypse O.C.C.s are no longer as unnerved or afraid of the walking dead. That means the zombies' effective H.F. drops by four points (if 13, it is now 9) for these courageous individuals. Mainly because they become desensitized to the horror. The only time the H.F. might be at full is if the zombie pops out of nowhere and surprises our hero, or if

*cealment*, *Camouflage*, and *Concealment*, have an impact on Perception Rolls. When a Perception Roll is attempted against another character (player or NPC) who is using a Stealth or Concealment skill, treat it as a combat type “roll off.” Both characters (the person using the *skill* and the one using a *Perception Roll*) roll 1D20 and the *high roll* wins.

The character using the skill gets a bonus of +1 for every 10 points in his skill percentage (round down). The character using Perception gets to add in his usual Perception Roll bonuses. **Example:** Carl’s character is sneaking up on a cultist guarding a door. His Prowl skill is 65%, giving the character a +6 bonus in the “roll off” of *Skill vs Perception*. The cultist has a Perception bonus of +3.

Each character rolls a twenty-sided die (1D20).

Carl rolls an 11 on the D20 and adds his +6 skill bonus for a total of 17.

Todd, playing the cultist on guard, rolls a 16 on the D20 and adds his Perception Roll bonus of +3 for a total of 19. He wins. The cultist hears something, he turns towards Carl’s character, begins to draw his gun and call out to his teammates that there is an intruder. Carl’s character is discovered and he is in trouble.

## Ranged Combat

The following are simple rules involving *guns* and other *modern weapons*. These rules are fun, fast and easy to use while reasonably simulating gunplay.

### Modern Weapon Proficiency (W.P.)

There is more to shooting a revolver, pistol, rifle and other weapons, than pointing and squeezing the trigger. Even taking careful aim requires practice with the weapon, and different categories of weapons have different applications, quirks and considerations one needs to know to get the optimum performance out of them. A Modern Weapon Proficiency in a particular type of weapon gives the character a good understanding of all of these things, at least in that particular type of weapon. The character will know how to handle the weapon safely and how to use and reload it, disassemble, unjam, clean and otherwise maintain the weapon. He also knows the basic specifications/capabilities of the weapon, such as the type of ammunition it takes, maximum effective range, approximate damage, special accessories for the weapon (gun sights, silencers, etc.), and the weapon’s quirks, strengths and weaknesses.

The character has also had hours (perhaps years) of training with the weapon and continues to work out with the weapon on a regular basis. This means target practice and practical experience with it in the field and, as a result, he has a good *feel* for the weapon; its weight, its kick when fired, the sound of gunfire, and performance/exactly what it can do. A character with a Modern W.P. can make Aimed and “Called Shots” (aimed at a specific location within a larger target, such as shooting a gun out of an opponent’s hands, shooting the hand, shooting an antenna, or tire, or whatever). His penalties are also *less* when shooting *bursts* or *wild*.

### No Weapon Proficiency (W.P.)

Anybody who does not have a W.P. in a particular weapon type *CAN* pick up a gun and use it, but does so without benefit of any bonuses. The bonuses that follow do not apply to this unskilled character, but a weapon can still be deadly in his hands. P.P. attribute bonuses and Hand to Hand combat bonuses do *NOT* apply to modern weapons.

Furthermore, the untrained shooter does *not* know how to reload or clean the weapon or anything about ammunition, the gun’s kick, how to use a gun sight to aim accurately, or anything about guns or gun safety – all he can do is pick it up, aim as best he can and pull the trigger. **Note:** A character with no gun proficiency rolls 1D20 with *no* bonuses to strike, can *NOT* make an *Aimed Shot* or a *Called Shot* and suffers a penalty of -3 to strike with burst attacks, -5 to strike when shooting a machine-gun or other heavy weapon, and -6 when shooting wild.

### Traditional Guns

Any character in **Dead Reign™** can use guns, but many may not have the desire, interest or training to use them. Remember, although any character may use a gun, without a W.P. the character has *no* bonus to strike and may have no idea how to reload the weapon once its ammunition payload is spent.

Physical oriented O.C.C.s and combat oriented occupations may provide one or more W.P.s in modern weapons, otherwise the character must select a weapon skill (W.P.) as one of his *Elective* or *Secondary* skills.

**Note:** See *Skill Descriptions: W.P. Modern Weapons* for complete descriptions, damage, range and details.

**W.P. Handguns:** A familiarity with all types of handguns including revolvers and pistols. W.P. Bonuses: +1 to strike at levels 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12 and 14.

**W.P. Rifles:** A familiarity with the very accurate, single shot bolt-action style of rifles used for hunting and sniping, and automatic and semi-automatic, military assault rifles like the M-16 and AK-47. W.P. Bonuses: +1 to strike at levels 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11 and 13.

**W.P. Shotgun:** A familiarity with the classic double-barrel shotgun and police and military versions of shotguns with ammo drums.

W.P. Bonuses: +1 to strike at levels 1, 3, 6, 10 and 14.

**W.P. Submachine-Gun:** A familiarity with small arms automatic weapons like the Uzi. W.P. Bonuses: +1 to strike at levels 1, 3, 6, 9, 12 and 15.

**W.P. Heavy Military Weapons:** Familiarity with military hardware, including grenade launchers, mortars, machine-guns, and mini-guns. W.P. Bonuses: +1 to strike at levels 1, 3, 6, 10 and 14.

**W.P. Military Flamethrowers:** Familiarity with different types of flame casting weapons used by the military and mercenaries. W.P. Bonuses: +1 to strike at levels 2, 5, 10 and 15.

# Weapon Modifiers

## Bonuses & Penalties Depending on Circumstance

To shoot something the attacker must roll 1D20 and needs an 8 or higher to strike. HOWEVER, the shooter may also have *bonuses* to hit from Weapon Proficiency skills and *penalties* from conditions and circumstances.

**Bonuses:** The only bonuses that apply to using guns and other ranged weapons are the specific *Weapon Proficiency*, *Sniping skill bonus* if the character has that skill, any applicable bonus from the weapon itself, and the ones that follow . . .

**Aimed Shot Bonus:** Only a single shot can be accurately “aimed” (no bursts or shooting wild). The skilled shooter is +2 to strike, but the attack counts as two melee attacks. This applies to a single shot fired from a revolver, pistol, bolt-action rifle, semi-automatic rifle, shotgun or grenade launcher. **Note:** An “Aimed Shot” can only be tried with a single “sniper-style” shot, not a burst or when shooting wild.

**A “Called Shot” target specification.** This is an Aimed Shot that homes in on a specific part of a larger target, such as a bull’s-eye, an opponent’s head, hand, gun, radio, radio antenna, sensor cluster, spotlight, tires, etc., but counts as two melee attacks.

To make a “Called Shot,” the player must “call” or “announce” his character’s intention; i.e. “I’m going to shoot the gun from his hand,” aim and shoot. A carefully *Aimed and Called Shot* gets the benefit of the +2 bonus to aim but counts as *three melee attacks/actions*. On the other hand, a quickly aimed Called Shot only counts as two melee attacks, but does not count as a true Aimed Shot and does NOT get the +2 bonus to strike.

*Penalties on a Called Shot:* Furthermore, a bull’s-eye or any small target is difficult to shoot, and even with an aimed and/or Called Shot, the shooter suffers a penalty of -3 or -4 to strike (sometimes more depending on the target). **Note:** A “Called Shot” can only be tried with a single “sniper-style” shot, not a burst or when shooting wild.

**Rolling a Natural Twenty to Strike** *always* hits its target and does double damage (Critical Strike). The only way it can miss is if the defender rolls a Natural Twenty to dodge!

**Single Shot:** The standard, non-Aimed, non-burst, single firing of a ranged weapon counts as one melee attack. No additional bonuses or penalties apply, beyond those gained from W.P. skills and situational modifiers below.

## Penalties

Penalties are *accumulative*, so if a character with W.P. Sub-machine-Gun was firing a burst weapon and shooting wild, he’d be firing the burst weapon at half his usual bonuses as well as suffering a penalty of -6 to strike for shooting wild!

**Shooting Blind:** -10 to strike what you cannot see, including shooting into ground cover without actually seeing a specific target, and firing around corners without looking.

**Shooting Bursts:** Automatic firing, or bursts, are not intended for accuracy: reduce the shooter’s normal W.P. bonuses to strike by half. If the character does not have a W.P. for the weapon he is -3 to strike.

**Shooting Wild:** Has a penalty of -6 to strike and applies even to trained weapons experts when the character is terrified, angry/enraged, panicked, off balance, drunk, shooting from a moving vehicle/platform/horseback, spraying an area, shooting while under heavy fire himself, and while running, leaping, dodging, falling or hanging upside down.

**Shooting at a Moving Target:** -1 to strike someone running (under 20 mph/32 km), -1 to strike for each additional 50 mph (80 km) of speed the target is traveling, and an additional -1 to strike if the target is taking evasive action (zig-zag, leaping behind cover, etc.).

**Shooting at Someone Behind Cover:** If the target is completely covered/concealed there is no hope of hitting him from a distance, and the shooter will need to find a different vantage point where he can see the character or move in on the place of protection and concealment. If the target is hiding but part of him/it can be seen or if the target periodically pops its head or arm out to shoot back, curse or peek out, the shooter must make a *Called Shot* to shoot him/it and either shoot what little is seen or wait until he pops into the open for a couple of seconds.

**Shooting Beyond the Effective Range:** One may attempt a shot that is as much as 30% farther than the Maximum Effective Range of any given weapon, but the shooter suffers a penalty of -5 to strike.

**A Character’s P.P. Bonuses** do *NOT* count when shooting a gun.

## Dodging Bullets

A character may try to dodge gunfire on the condition he knows they are coming and he can see his attacker.

The only applicable bonuses for dodging gunfire are the character’s P.P. attribute bonus and any O.C.C. bonus to dodge. The defender trying to dodge must match or better the shooter’s roll to strike to make a successful dodge.

### Dodging Penalties:

-10 to dodge at point-blank range; within 10 feet (3 m) of the shooter.

-5 to dodge at close range, within 50 feet (15.2 m) of the shooter.

## Quick Reference – Bonuses & Penalties

*All Ranged Attacks:* Requires a roll of 8 to strike (including W.P. & Sniping bonuses).

*Aimed Shot:* +2 to strike (takes 2 attacks).

*Called Shot:* No bonus, but enables the character to get a bead on very small or difficult specific targets (counts as two melee attacks; possible penalties for small targets).

*“Aimed” Called Shot:* +2 to strike, but can target very small, specific items and areas (takes *three* attacks; possible penalties for small targets).

*Shooting Blind:* -10 to strike.

*Shooting Bursts:* Strike bonuses reduced by ½ (-3 to strike without W.P.).

*Shooting Wild:* -6 to strike.

*Shooting 30% Beyond Normal Range:* -5 to strike.

*Target is Moving:* -1 to strike, -1 additional per 50 mph (80 km) beyond 20 mph (32 km), and -1 for evasive action.

*Target is Behind Cover:* Requires Called Shot, impossible if complete cover.

*Dodging Gunfire, within 10 feet (3 m):* -10 to dodge.

*Dodging Gunfire, within 50 feet (15.2 m):* -5 to dodge.

## Gun Terms

**Attacks per Melee:** Each individual shot/bullet fired counts as one melee attack. Firing a short burst also counts as one melee attack, but is less accurate. Long bursts and bursts from certain weapons will be indicated in the W.P. description and may count as two (sometimes more) attacks. Thus, if the character has five attacks per melee round, he can shoot five single bullets or short bursts, or two long bursts and one single shot or short burst. If firing a machine-gun, only two short bursts and one attack with a different weapon or one other type of action is possible.

**Damage:** The amount of S.D.C./Hit Point damage the weapon inflicts from a single round/bullet and/or short burst.

**Range:** This is the effective range the weapon can be fired with any measure of accuracy.

**Main Body:** The “main body” of vehicles and giant creatures is typically the largest area of body mass offered by the target. On people/humanoid creatures that is the upper torso (chest and waist). The main body of an automobile is the large body mass that covers the frame. Parts not considered to be part of the main body include the tires/wheels, legs, arms, hands, sensor cluster, headlights, etc. To strike something other than the main body, the attacker must make a “Called Shot,” or roll a *Natural Twenty*. (A Natural 20 always hits its mark, unless an opponent attempting to dodge also rolls a Natural 20.)

**Payload:** This is how many shots the weapon can fire calculated by how much ammunition the weapon holds before the ammo clip is empty and must be reloaded. “Unlimited” means the weapon draws from an unconventional source (such as a renewable power source or nuclear battery, etc.). Conventional weapons have a finite payload and once all available ammunition is fired, the weapon is useless until more ammo can be acquired.

## Weapons and the Player Characters

Guns kill.

That’s what they are designed to do. That means they are dangerous and deadly. The S.D.C. rules are designed to mitigate damage and injury to some degree (“Tom, you’re bleeding.” “Ah, it’s nothing, really.”) but that does not make the character superhuman or invincible, nor guns any less dangerous. For every amazing story of a real life person who takes eight or ten slugs to the body and still manages to drive himself to the hospital, there are 10,000 incidents where one or two bullets killed or severely injured the victim. That means the use of firearms in any modern setting should be done judiciously. Introducing a gun into a situation ratchets up the seriousness and danger. When fighting zombies in a confined area, it increases the chance of shooting a comrade or innocent bystander.

Careless or panicked use of firearms can hurt or kill innocent people or teammates, damage or destroy evidence and property, and get the quick attention of other walking dead and people in the area. People who might not be friendly – bandits, raiders, lunatics, cultists, Retro-Savages, etc. Nothing draws attention faster than a gunfight. The sound of gunfire indicates the living or intruders are present at that location, somebody is in some kind of trouble, zombies will soon converge on that location, and other menaces are now privy to the fact that people are in the general area.

In the deadly world after the Zombie Apocalypse, anyone who can lay their hands on a gun has one or six. Firearms and ammunition are also a hot trade item. Everyone wants a gun and needs ammunition.



## Game Rules for Zombie Combat

Don’t over-think it. Here’s how combat against the walking dead works in the context of the game.

**1. Roll initiative, high roll wins.** Living human beings usually win initiative rolls as most zombies are slow. You have first shot. Use it well.

**2. Attackers need to roll 15 or higher to strike and do damage.** Zombies have an A.R. of 14. That means only rolls to strike of 15 or higher inflict damage.

1-4 misses completely.

5-14 may hit, especially at close range, but does not surpass the A.R. 14 and does NO DAMAGE. Bullets and other attacks leave holes but do no damage and do not even slow the zombie down. Unless a roll to strike is higher than the zombie’s *Natural A.R. 14* (15 and higher) it doesn’t matter what the weapon is, it inflicts *no damage*. You can stab, hit or shoot a zombie all day without inflicting damage unless your roll to strike is 15 (with modifiers/bonuses) or higher.

15-20 (possibly higher with combat bonuses) strikes and does damage. Roll for damage as usual and keep fighting, your life depends on it.

Unless a specific body part is targeted (hand, arm, leg, neck, head) as a “Called Shot,” all attacks hit the zombie’s *Main Body*. That’s okay, because depleting the Main Body leaves the zombie’s 16-21 Hit Points exposed. Deplete the Hit Points next and the zombie falls over. S.D.C. (first) and Hit Points (second)

reduced to zero takes the zombie out of commission for the next *one hour!* That's how long before it regenerates enough to rise from the dead, again. Fighting for your life just to get away? Then taking the zombie *out of commission* for the next hour is just fine. Several people fighting the same zombie at the same time can take one down by reducing S.D.C. and Hit Points to zero within 2-3 melee rounds (30-45 seconds), sometimes faster. Blasting its brains out or removing its head after the rest of the battle is done to destroy it is a luxury you can consider after the battle is won.

**3. Most weapons do damage against zombies.** The trick is rolling above the zombie's A.R. (need a 15 or higher to strike most zombies). Any roll to strike above 14 strikes and does damage. G.M.s, keep track. The real danger of zombies is not that they are hard to kill, it is their rapidly growing numbers.

**4. Human characters usually have 1-3 more attacks per melee round than a zombie, use them!** Most humans will have more attacks per melee round (15 seconds of combat) than the zombies they fight.

**Zombies** typically have *two or three attacks* per melee round. Only the fastest have *four*.

**Humans** with a Hand to Hand Combat skill typically have *four attacks* per melee round at level one, and get more with experience! Plus some O.C.C.s like the Reaper and Soldier, and Physical skills like Boxing, provide an extra attack per melee and/or other combat bonuses. Even *Ordinary People* without combat training usually have as many attacks as the zombies, and Hand to Hand Combat is available as an Elective Skill and Hand to Hand: Basic is available as a Secondary Skill. That means most characters have one or two "free" shots at the zombie per melee; 1-3 attacks in which the creature cannot strike back. Furthermore, most zombies do not parry or dodge, they are open targets to fire or pound away at. Do it! You'll need the advantage.

**Game Note:** It was funny, but in play tests for this game, experienced players were so used to fighting opponents who were their equal that when they had a free attack on the zombie, they hesitated. "That can't be right. You mean I can just shoot it without it hitting me right back? What's that, I can do it again?! Cool!" Game Masters, at first you might need to *remind players* to use *all* their attacks per melee while the zombies just shuffle forward like a slow moving target waving in the wind.

This actually works wonderfully on the horror level, because half the time (more than half the time, really), the attacks of our heroes fall *under* the zombie's A.R. and do no damage. The heroes need the extra attacks just to keep up. It also adds to the eeriness and sense of horror when the heroes are unloading into the walking dead, and the G.M. says, "Your attack hits, but is under the A.R. so you do no damage, the zombie grunts and keeps coming toward you." Or, "The blast hits, does 22 points of damage. The zombie staggers a bit and keeps on coming!" And they keep on coming, and coming, even when down to one or two Hit Points, until that last strike finishes it off! This unrelenting onslaught is visceral and intense, scary, and builds to a fever pitch, especially when the monster is practically on top of the character and there are more coming! You'll see. It's awesome.

**5. When the melee round ends,** the action continues starting the next melee round.

**Note:** As G.M., I have one player attack, and then I turn to the next player and go around the table. Then back to the first player for his next attack (or the zombie's and the player's reaction). I do not let one player use all his attacks and then go to the next. Give everyone a turn in the hot action.



## Zombie Close Combat Firearm Rules

### The Can't Miss, Point-Blank Attack

**Can't miss when the gun barrel is *pressed against* the zombie's head, face, limb or body!** This happens in zombie close combat more often than you might think, because zombies can only fight using their hands and teeth, and are fearless so they don't even try to avoid getting shot.

Ignore A.R. when this happens. It is an *automatic strike* and the attack does damage; first to S.D.C., then, when S.D.C. is gone, a limb is blown off.

**Die Roll:** If you'd prefer, you can just roll for damage with this pressed meat point-blank range attack, but I implore you to *roll 1D20 to strike* as usual. Why? To see if the attacker misses with a roll of *one* (zombie moved unexpectedly, the shooter got distracted or bumped, etc.) or does *double damage* with the roll of a Natural 20 (triple damage on a Natural 20 when it's a "Called Shot" to the head or neck)! This can be very dramatic and loads of fun.

Any roll in between (2-19) hits and does full damage at point-blank range.

### The Shouldn't Miss, Point-Blank Attack

**The gun barrel is 1-24 inches (2.5 to 61 cm) away from the target.** This requires the usual roll to strike with bonuses, because a sudden movement, a shaky hand from fear, a bump, a distraction or panic might cause the shooter to miss even at this very close range.

+7 to strike when shooting at the Main Body at this close range where the attacker can almost touch the zombie's body.

+3 to strike when shooting at the head, neck or a specific limb.

**Note:** As always, the roll to strike must surpass the zombie's A.R. (you need a 15 or higher to strike and do damage). A strike roll below 15 may hit but does no damage. The bonuses of a *Shouldn't Miss Point-Blank Attack* do NOT apply if the shooter

is moving and shooting. The shooter must stop, be stationary, take aim and fire.

### Close-Range Attack

**The zombie target is within 3-15 feet (0.9 to 4.6 m).** +2 to strike main body. +1 to strike head, neck or limb. Roll 1D20 as usual. **Note:** The bonuses of a Close-Range Attack do NOT apply if the shooter is moving. The shooter must stop, be stationary, take aim and fire. Otherwise, roll as usual (other bonuses may apply).

### Beyond 15 feet (4.6 m) roll to strike as usual

Roll 1D20 as usual. No special bonuses for close proximity apply.

### Zombie Combat Notes

The bonuses above are in addition to any P.P. or W.P. bonuses the character may have. Hand to hand combat bonuses do not apply to *ranged weapons* – guns, bows and arrows, etc.

See the *Equipment section* for weaponry, range, damage, payload, and other combat details for various types of weapons.

**Melee Combat:** All hand to hand attacks, be they punches, kicks, body flips or a strike with a melee weapon (sword, ax, crowbar, mace, etc.), require a roll of 1D20 and all combat is “close combat” or “melee combat.” Fisticuffs and kicks only inflict 20% of their normal damage against a zombie, even on a head shot or blow to the neck. A Natural 20 to strike does 40% the usual damage. Attacks with most weapons inflict full damage. Low caliber guns inflict half damage and some types of blade weapons may get stuck in the body of a zombie (roll percentile; 01-60% means it is stuck), requiring effort (one melee action/attack) to pull it out of the monster. Most swords indicate the chance of it getting stuck. Curved swords do full damage and don’t get stuck.

A “**Called Shot**” is always necessary to hit a specific limb, the neck or head.

**Game Master’s Quick Decision Making.** Roll 1D20. 1-10 means *no*, 11-20 means *yes*. I use this technique all the time whenever a player asks me a question I don’t know or haven’t yet considered. “Can I hide before they see me?” Roll 1D20. “Is there a box or plastic bag I can put this in?” Roll 1D20. Does the guard believe the character’s convincing cover story? Roll 1D20. And so on. I’m not saying to roll for everything, but when appropriate, it is fast, fun and fair.

## Notable Role-Playing Game & Combat Terms

**Adventure:** An adventure is the heroic and thrilling story that the player characters engage in. It is the responsibility of the Game Master to create and orchestrate each adventure.

**Alignment:** The moral fiber of a character. Alignment descriptions begin on page 152.

**Attacks per Melee:** Characters with no hand to hand combat training get only *one* attack/action per melee at levels 1, 6, and 12. No automatic parry or dodge and each attempt counts as one melee action. P.P. and W.P. bonuses apply to combat moves.

Characters with any kind of formal hand to hand combat training, from Hand to Hand: Basic to Martial Arts or Commando, usually start off with four attacks/actions per melee round. Each specific Hand to Hand Combat skill will indicate how many attacks the character starts with. This number grows with experience.

**Attributes:** Numbers used to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of your character. For example: P.P. means Physical Prowess; how smooth, agile and quick a character is in combat. A P.P. of 4 would indicate that the character is pretty clumsy. A P.P. of 9-12 would be an average, well coordinated character. While a P.P. of 16 or higher would belong only to characters with exceptional agility and reflexes. Attributes are also part of a character’s overall *Statistics* or *Stats*.

**Attribute Bonuses:** Combat and saving throw bonuses gained through physical or mental strengths that give a character an extra added degree of agility, strength, endurance, etc. (see the eight attributes).

**Automatic Dodge:** Certain characters and creatures are able to *automatically dodge* an attack without using up a melee attack/action. It is purely a defensive move in which the dodger bobs, weaves, bends or twists his body out of harm’s way. Roll for a dodge as normal (the automatic dodge is not an “automatic” success). An automatic dodge works just like a (automatic) parry in that the act of dodging does *not* use up any attacks to perform. Bonuses to auto-dodge come from the character’s P.P. attribute and any special bonus specifically for it (the bonus, skill or enhancement will say “automatic dodge”). Unless it specifically says a character has an Automatic Dodge, he does NOT.

**Back Flip:** The back flip involves throwing oneself backwards with the arms and shoulders, flipping the legs completely up, over, and back down on the ground into a standing position. The result is that one quickly moves backwards by a full body length. Doing a back flip counts as one melee attack/action and can be used as a dodge or for entertainment.

If used in place of a dodge, the character must roll higher than his opponent’s strike roll using only the natural die roll (do not include any dodge bonuses). Failure to beat the strike means taking full damage *without a chance to Roll with Punch*. Success means avoiding the attack like a dodge.

**Back Flip: Escape.** If used in place of a strike (when it’s the back-flipping character’s turn to strike) this removes the character from combat and counts as one melee attack/action. To get within striking range, he or his opponent must close ranks (move closer) and whoever does so spends one melee action/attack doing so. A Back Flip Escape also gives the back-flipping character the initiative.

**Back Flip: Attack.** This is especially useful against someone attempting some kind of back strike. Once the opponent is detected in the rear, the back flip moves one back into combat range. A back flip can also be used as a combined strike against an opponent to the rear of the character. Used with either a basic kick (1D8 damage), Karate Kick (2D6 damage) or a backhand strike. If striking with a back flip use only the bonus to back flip (not strike). Cannot be used with Death Blow or knockout/stun. This combat maneuver uses up one melee attack/action.





**Blind or Being Blinded:** Here are the definitive penalties and conditions for humans being blinded or fighting in absolute darkness without optical systems to see.

**Penalties:** Ignore all of the character's normal combat bonuses (they don't count; natural rolls only, minus the penalties) and the blind character is -10 to strike, parry and dodge, disarm, pull punch and similar combat moves! Speed is reduced by 30-50% (or should be) only because the blind character is unsure of himself and running or moving quickly is likely to cause him to stumble or trip into something and fall down (lose initiative and one melee attack/action), slam into a wall (1D6 S.D.C. damage, triple that if running) or run right into the arms of his opponent or some other danger. Obviously any skills requiring *vision* are impossible to perform.

Attacks per melee round and initiative are unchanged, but the character is lashing out wildly and guessing where his opponent is. This means the blind character has a good chance of accidentally striking a friend or innocent bystander by his wild flailing about or "blind shooting."

**Body Block/Tackle:** This is a combination of moves that involves a body block and a knockdown attack (counts as two melee attacks). A successful body block strike against a fellow human does 1D4 damage plus P.S. damage bonuses, and the opponent is likely to be knocked down. A successful strike always inflicts damage from a shoulder, elbow, or tucked head, unless his opponent dodges (no damage and no knockdown).

The victim who is hit can avoid being knocked down only by trying to maintain his balance and must roll percentile dice. A

typical Body Block ram has a 01-50% chance of knocking an opponent down and characters with no special balancing ability must roll *above* that number of fall.

**Knockdown Modifier:** Add 5% to the roll the victim needs to exceed for every five points of P.S. above 20. So an attacker with a P.S. of 30 requires his opponent to roll 01-60% to save vs getting bowled over. Characters with a special balancing ability from a skill such as Acrobatics or Gymnastics must roll *under* their current skill level to keep their balance (if 45% they must roll under 45, if 80% they must roll under 80). A successful maintain balance means the victim is not knocked down but loses one melee attack, and takes full damage.

**Knockdown Penalties:** Being knocked down causes the character struck to lose initiative (if he had it) and one attack/action for that melee round, plus he is knocked 1D6 feet (0.3 to 1.8 m) away from where he was standing at the moment of the attack. A roll with impact can reduce damage by half, but counts as one melee action.

**Body Flip/Throw:** A Judo style throw or flip that uses an attacker's own momentum and leverage to "flip" or "throw" him off his feet and onto the ground. Damage is 1D6 points plus P.S. damage bonus (if any), and the victim also loses initiative (if he had it) and one melee attack. A body flip counts as one melee attack. A victim of a throw can try to *roll with impact/fall* to diminish the damage (half if successful), but other penalties are unchanged.

**Bonuses:** Many skills and some occupations and character classes (O.C.C.s), weapons and other things may provide the fictional character with one or more *bonuses*. Combat bonuses to strike, parry, dodge, etc., are one type, bonuses to *save* vs a particular type of attack (poison, illness, possession, etc.) are another. Then there are bonuses to Perception Rolls, skills, and even S.D.C. Bonuses which are *added* to that particular character stat or combat or melee action. Always be sure to include your character's bonuses, they may make the difference between life and death.

**Campaign:** A word used to describe an ongoing game with the same characters. If you play the same characters with the same Game Master, in the same basic game world/setting, on a regular basis, then you are in a campaign. A campaign can be one long adventure or numerous adventures of varying length.

**Character:** Every player (except the G.M.) has a character that serves as an imaginary playing piece; also called the *Player Character*.

**Combat:** This is an "adventure" game, so there will be combat, from fisticuffs to gunplay. Combat is determined by the roll of a D20 plus "modifiers" (bonuses or penalties). See the *Combat section* for details.

**Combat Bonuses:** All appropriate bonuses available to the character are added to the various fighting abilities such as strike, parry or dodge, as well as initiative and saving throws. High physical attributes, certain Physical skills, Weapon Proficiencies (W.P.), the occasional O.C.C. bonus, racial bonus, and genetic enhancement *may* provide one or more combat bonuses. All applicable bonuses are combined and added to the character's dice rolls. Do not combine the strike bonus with the parry bonus, and so on; each combat maneuver is considered a separate category, so only the various bonuses to strike are added to

the strike roll, bonuses to parry added to the parry roll and so forth.

**Crash Damage to People in a Vehicle:** Damage to zombies is 10%.

**No Seat Belt.** Anyone not wearing a Seat Belt must roll to see if they are thrown clear in an accident. With percentile dice, a roll of 25% or higher indicates the character bounces around inside the vehicle and takes double damage. If the roll is under that, then the character is thrown clear and bounces around outside, taking 2D6 damage for every 10 mph (16 km) of vehicle speed.

**Seat Belts.** Characters wearing Seat Belts or other restraining straps take 1D6 damage for every 20 mph (32 km). The addition of a crash helmet and specially padded, asbestos suit reduces the damage by half.

**Motorcycle crashes.** With helmet and leather body covering, or some kind of protective garments, the character(s) takes 1D6 for every 10 mph (16 km). Without helmet or protective garments: 2D6 per 10 mph (16 km).

**Lucky Fall:** With all vehicles, motorcycle, car, van, truck, etc., there is a slim chance that each passenger and driver will be thrown clear, or luck out with only minor damage even in a terrible crash. Roll Percentile Dice: 1-20% Lucky Fall; 2D6 total damage. 21-00% Full normal damage.

**Critical Strike:** A powerful, special or nerve shattering strike that inflicts double the usual amount of damage. Critical Strike damage can be inflicted with bare hands or with a weapon.

**Damage:** The following are some of the typical damage amounts inflicted by common types of physical combat attacks. Remember to add any applicable damage bonus for P.S. attributes 16 and higher.

#### **Hand Strikes:**

**Backhand Strike (average):** 1D4

**Backhand Strike (martial arts):** 1D6

**Body Flip:** 1D6

**Human Fist/Punch:** 1D4

**Karate/Martial Arts Strike/Punch:** 2D4

**Elbow/Forearm:** 1D6

**Power Punch:** Does double damage, plus any other damage bonuses, but counts as two melee attacks. Applicable to all hand strikes.

#### **Foot Strikes:**

**Kick Attack (basic/average):** 1D8 (or 2D4)

**Karate Kick Attack:** 2D6

**Leap Kick:** 3D8, but counts as two melee attacks/actions.

**Knee:** 1D6

**Backward Sweep:** No damage, but knocks down opponent if strike is successful (he loses one melee action and initiative).

**Trip/Leg Hook:** No damage, but knocks down opponent if the strike is successful (he loses one melee action and initiative).

**Power Kick:** Does double damage, but counts as two melee attacks and cannot be done with a Leap Kick.

#### **Miscellaneous:**

**Thrown/Dropped Small Objects:** 1D4 or 1D6.

**Thrown/Dropped Large Objects:** 3D6 per 100 lbs (45 kg), +10 per 40 feet (12.2 m).

**Falling:** 1D6 damage per 10 feet (3 m).

**Collision:** 2D4 per 10 mph (16 km).

**Death:** Just as in real life, these fictional characters can *die*. The death of a hero in role-playing games, much like comic books and ongoing television shows, is usually a fairly uncommon event, and when it happens, it is usually pretty dramatic. (Hopefully a noble or heroic sacrifice). The amount of death in a campaign usually depends on the individual Game Master, his players, and the world setting. In **Dead Reign™**, the world is crawling with zombies who want to kill you, so death *may* be commonplace, unless the player characters use their heads, work as a team, watch each other's backs and don't take silly risks.

Players should take a character's death calmly. Remember, it's **ONLY** a game. When one character dies, roll up a new one and try to get back into the game with the orientation and personality of the *new* character. It may be handy to have a *back-up character* already rolled up and waiting in the wings, in case the current character should die.

Game Masters, you don't have to "pause" the game while the player rolls up a "new" character, but try to work him back into the plot as soon as he is ready to rejoin the game. It's no fun sitting out a game for long periods of time. However, characters should not be a dime a dozen, or killed on a whim or as a result of personal conflict between other player(s) or the Game Master. A good G.M. should also try to give the player characters *options*, i.e. a chance to surrender, a desperate chance at escape, etc. Then again, sometimes there's no way around it. I've killed plenty of characters as a G.M. Some of the deaths were spectacular and worthy of a heroic poem, and other times the character just played dumb or took a dangerous risk and paid the ultimate price. It happens, and often adds to the drama of the story.

**Death Blow:** A special attack designed to kill an opponent in one or two strikes! This attack is often limited in hand to hand combat to the roll of a "Natural" (no bonuses apply) high strike number; e.g. Death Blow on a Natural 18-20. Whenever the words "Death Blow" are presented without limitation, the character can use a death strike whenever he desires, however, such a devastating attack counts as two melee attacks/actions.

**Human vs Human:** Against humans and natural creatures, the attack does double the normal damage, including P.S. bonuses, direct to Hit Points. This attack can be used with punches and kicks or handheld weapons such as swords, clubs, etc. It is *not* applicable to guns and does not work through armor; the armor must be removed or penetrated. **Note:** Does not work on the walking dead.

**Dice:** As noted previously, dice are an essential. Track 'em down.

**Disarm:** The act of disarming is simply getting rid of the opponent's weapon; it does no damage. It can be used as a defensive move in place of a dodge or parry, or can be done as an attack/strike.

The disarm move is a strike, hold or grappling maneuver that causes an opponent to drop his weapon or whatever he's holding. Counts as one melee attack/action. Disarm does not give the weapon to the character making the disarm move. True, the item

is forced out of the victim's grasp, but it is either knocked away or falls to the ground.

Typically an opponent is disarmed on a roll of a Natural 19 or 20 when used as a defensive move. Roll a disarming strike to attack as usual – high roll wins. A failed disarming attack does no damage and means one's opponent remains armed, is probably mad, and ready to strike.

**Dodge:** A character dodges by *moving* out of the way of the attack. Dodging always takes up one attack/action per melee round. To dodge, the defender must roll equal to or higher than the attacker's strike roll on a twenty-sided die.

**Entangle:** A defender can attempt to trap the weapon or arm of an attacker. This is done instead of parrying or dodging, and takes up one attack per melee. An entangle is successful if the defender rolls above the attacker's strike roll. It takes one attack and a roll to entangle to keep an opponent's arm or weapon entangled every melee round. In order to get free, the entangled opponent must roll a dodge against the entangle roll.

**Game Master (G.M.):** This is the person who controls the game "world," sets up and develops the adventures and pacing, and serves as the general referee and rules interpreter. All the *non-player characters (NPCs)*, innocent bystanders, police, politicians, zombies, evil cultists, and even the weather are controlled by the Game Master. G.M.s should try to be fair and run a *fun* game.

**Game Session & Adventures:** Each time you play is considered a game or gaming session. A game session can last a couple hours or half the day. A typical game *runs* about 3-4 hours. A game session can be a complete story/adventure in itself, or one story in an ongoing series like a television show or comic book. A game session can also end without a final resolve, with part two (or three, or four . . .) picking up *next game* where the group left off.

**Hand to Hand Combat:** Fighting skills that provide the character with attacks per melee, bonuses, and techniques. Characters without combat training have only one attack per melee and have no automatic chance to parry.

**Hit Points:** This is the number of points of damage a character can take before dying. Characters don't lose Hit Points until their S.D.C. is down to zero. A character's base Hit Points is the P.E. attribute plus 1D6. Another 1D6 of Hit Points is gained every time the character advances an experience level. Lost Hit Points are not recovered without medical attention and recuperation.

**Holds:** Using both hands, the attacker grabs on to some part of the opponent's body and attempts to immobilize him. If the strike is successful, then the victim is helpless until released. Holds do no damage. Neither the attacker nor the victim can attack, parry or dodge while the hold is working. It's easy for the attacker to hold the victim so that some third character can attack unopposed or attack from the rear.

Getting out of a hold requires agility. Both the victim and attacker roll twenty-sided dice and add in their P.P. attribute scores. The person doing the hold also gets to add in all his bonuses to hold and from the P.P. attribute (if any). High roll wins! If the attacker wins, then the hold continues. If the victim wins, then the hold is released and combat can continue.

Types of holds include:

**Arm Hold:** This involves twisting the arm around to the victim's back. Any items in the hand of the arm being held can be easily removed.

**Leg Hold:** The victim is on the ground with his leg held up. There's no way for him to get up until the hold is released.

**Body Hold:** Any number of wrestling holds. The victim can be held on the ground or in a standing position.

**Neck Hold:** The victim is held around the neck from behind. This leaves the victim totally vulnerable to attacks from any other character.

**Horror Factor (H.F.):** Some creatures are so alien, monstrous-looking and frightening, that they exude what is called a Horror Factor. See the Horror Factor description on page 177.

**Initiative:** Whoever gets to attack first is considered to have the initiative and is the "attacker." Initiative is automatic in sneak attacks and long-range attacks. In most other cases, each opponent rolls a twenty-sided, highest roll gets the initiative. Rolling for initiative takes place at the beginning of each melee round of combat.

**I.S.P. or Inner Strength Points:** Dead Reign™ doesn't have psionics (though it could be easily added), but most Palladium RPGs do. I.S.P. are spent or expended every time a character uses a psionic power. When all I.S.P. are used up, the character cannot use any more psychic powers until he gets some points back.

**Karate Kick Attack:** A special move and type of kick attack that is designed to do more damage than an ordinary kick. A typical Karate Kick does 2D6 damage (+P.S. damage bonus if any), a knee attack 1D6. Counts as one melee attack. Anyone trained in hand to hand combat can do a basic kick or knee attack, but only characters with Hand to Hand: Commando, Expert or Martial Arts can perform a Karate Kick. Commando and Martial Arts can also perform the other Foot Strikes (see *Damage* earlier). Also see Leap Kick.

**Karate Punch/Strike:** A martial arts strike that does 2D4 damage.

**Kick Attack:** This is the simple act of using one's legs and feet to kick an opponent. A typical kick does 1D8 damage. Anyone can try to kick an opponent.

**Leap Kick:** A Leap Kick is performed by the character putting all of his energy into what is in effect a power kick by leaping completely off the ground and attempting to kick an opponent with everything he can muster. A typical Leap Kick does 3D8 damage (+P.S. damage bonus if any), but counts as two melee attacks/actions. Only characters with Hand to Hand: Commando or Martial Arts can perform a Leap Kick and other Foot Strikes (see *Damage* earlier).

**Knockdown:** Getting knocked down, falling or getting struck by a fast, heavy vehicle, or explosion, or falling or getting knocked back dozens of yards/meters (30 feet/9 m or more) will cause the character to take damage from the force of the impact. While most armors are padded, they only provide so much protection.

**Damage:** Inflicts 1D6 Hit Point/S.D.C. damage for every 20 feet (6 m) one falls or is knocked back. And figure 1D6 points of damage for every 20 S.D.C. in an explosion. Round down. If

the fall/knock back is 100 feet (30.5 m) or more, there is a 01-65% chance of being temporarily knocked out for 1D6 melee rounds.

**Penalties:** In ALL cases, when a character is knocked down or off his feet he automatically loses initiative and one melee attack/action. This is true even if the character is knocked down right where he was standing or only a few feet/meters.

**Knockout/Stun:** Anyone hit by a knockout or stun attack will be temporarily incapacitated. The victim is not necessarily unconscious, just dazed – reduce attacks per melee to one and no combat bonuses for a stunned/dazed character for 1D4 melee rounds.

**Long-Range Attack or Ranged Attack:** An attack done at a distance using a long-range weapon or power. Provided the attacker is not seen, the defender automatically loses initiative and may not dodge the first attack that melee round from a long-range attack.

**Magic:** Most Palladium role-playing games include magic, spells, powers, weapons and monsters. Although some of these things may be inspired by myths and legends, *NONE* of them are real. Magic is not part of **Dead Reign™**, though it could be easily added to it.

**Megaverse®:** A term we coined (and Trademarked) back in 1989 to identify the multi-genre, anything goes, infinite worlds and infinite possibilities that Palladium's one game system has to offer. A complete *catalog* of Palladium role-playing games and sourcebooks is available, free, upon request. Send catalog requests (and letters or comments) to Palladium Books Inc., Department P, 39074 Web Court, Westland, MI 48185-7606 – or visit us online at [www.palladiumbooks.com](http://www.palladiumbooks.com).

**Melee or Melee Round:** Exactly 15 seconds. The segment of time combatants have to strike, counter and/or return strike. Generally, playing characters have two or more attacks per melee.

**Miss:** A roll of 1-4 to strike (after bonuses) is always *a miss*. A roll of one misses regardless of bonuses.

**Multiple Attackers:** Takes place when an opponent is faced by more than one attacker. Characters with hand to hand combat skills can attempt to parry any attacks within their line of sight, from up to three attackers. The defender from multiple attackers can strike at only one target at a time (see *Paired Weapons* for a rare exception).

**Natural Twenty:** In all of Palladium's role-playing games (RPGs), the outcome of combat has always been determined by the roll of a twenty-sided die (1D20). The higher the roll, the better. Many combat "rolls" get bonuses to strike, parry, dodge, etc. These bonuses are added to the roll of the die. For example, if a 12 is rolled on a D20, but a character has cumulative bonuses of +4 to strike, then the roll is *modified* to 16 to strike.

A *Natural Twenty* is rolling the highest possible number (20) without adding any bonuses to the number rolled. A Natural 20 never misses unless one's opponent *also* rolls a Natural 20 (very uncommon, but it does happen). Yes, a Natural 20 will hit even if an opponent's roll to dodge is higher than 20 after bonuses are added to it. A Natural 20 is also considered a *critical strike* and does *double damage*. Or if the player was trying to shoot or knock a weapon out of an opponent's hand, or grab an item before an opponent gets it, the action is an automatic success. In

fact, a *Natural Twenty* always succeeds or beats and opponent's roll.

**Non-Player Character (NPC):** A character that is not played by any of the players, such as villains and other characters played by the Game Master (G.M.).

**Occupational Character Class (O.C.C.):** O.C.C. is the term most Palladium games use to describe the character's stats, education, and occupation. It indicates specific skills, skill selections, goals, orientation, equipment, and salary.

An R.C.C. (Racial Character Class) is basically the same thing but refers to monsters and aliens with abilities that come to all creatures of that specific *race*.

P.C.C. stands for Psychic Character Class and is a term reserved for "psychic" characters in *Beyond the Supernatural™*, *Nightbane®* and *Mystic China™*.

**Paired Weapons:** Certain kinds of weapons, such as sais, nunchaku, daisho, knives, clubs and swords, can be used as paired weapons. Users of paired weapons can strike and parry simultaneously, can do twin strikes against a single target or against a pair of targets, and can parry two different opponents at the same time. In other words, combatants skilled in paired weapons often can do two actions for every one of their melee attacks (i.e. strike and parry). However, a twin, simultaneous strike with both weapons means losing the automatic parry and leaves the character open to his opponent's next attack without benefit of a parry (dodge is optional but uses up a melee action). Also see *W.P. Paired Weapons*.

**Parry:** A defender can attempt to parry most physical attacks. This is done by blocking the attacker's blow with a weapon or hand. Characters trained in hand to hand combat can parry without losing melee attacks. Bullets and energy attacks cannot be parried!

**Percentile Dice:** Percentile dice are typically a pair of ten-sided dice (2D10), each a different color. One ten-sided die represents "tens" and the other ten-sided die represents "ones." So if the red D10 is tens and the white D10 is ones, then a roll of 3 on red and a roll of 5 on the white would indicate the number 35. Get it?

Percentile dice are commonly rolled to determine the "random outcome" on a table or chart as well as for "skill checks."

**Perception Rolls:** A roll made to notice, see, hear or recognize a clue or concealment. It is described and explained in detail in the Combat section.

**Player or Role-Player:** Probably *you*. A player is a person who assumes the role of a fictional character in a role-playing game.

**Player Character:** A fictional character that is played or "run" by one of the people playing in the game. An NPC (Non-Player Character) is a character, villain or monster played by the G.M.

**Power Punch:** A haymaker thrown with everything the character has, his every last ounce of strength. A power punch ALWAYS counts as two melee actions. A power kick can also be done. For characters with normal P.S., it does double damage in Hit Points and/or S.D.C. (normal punch damage of 1D4 times two plus any possible P.S. or Hand to Hand Combat damage bonus on top of that).

**P.P.E.:** Potential Psychic Energy – an inner energy used to develop human potential. It is also what zombies eat when they kill you, and is the source of magic. At the moment of death, a character's P.P.E. doubles.

**Psionics/Psychic Ability:** Most Palladium role-playing games include psychic abilities. Although some aspects of psionics are inspired by myths, legends, and fringe science, *NONE* of them are real. Psionics is not part of **Dead Reign™**, though it could be easily added to it.

**Punch:** A normal human punch does 1D4 damage. A karate style punch or chop does 2D4 damage. A power punch does double damage. In all cases, include any P.S. attribute bonus (for P.S. 16 and higher) as well as any damage bonuses from a Hand to Hand Combat skill, or O.C.C. Bonuses.

**Pull Punch:** The ability to control the force of a hand to hand attack, whether it be a punch, kick or with a hand weapon. Usually used to reduce the blow to less than killing force. The character can choose to do half damage, quarter damage, a single point or no damage at all. A character must declare a pulled punch, and the player must roll 11 or better on a twenty-sided die (1D20) to successfully pull his punch. A failed roll to pull means full damage is accidentally inflicted.

**Random Roll/Determination:** Always refer to a chart or table in which a character can roll percentile dice for a random result as dictated by the roll of the dice. In many cases, the player or Game Master *may* choose to pick the desired result. However, at Palladium, we've found "random rolls" to be more fun and challenging than picking something that sounds comfortable, easy or desirable.

**Role-Playing Game (RPG):** Sometimes called *fantasy role-playing (FRP)*, are games, like this one, that build a story with imaginary characters in a fictional setting. Role-playing games are story-telling games that cover every genre imaginable, including horror, fantasy, sword and sorcery, science fiction, cyberpunk, mecha/giant robots, super-heroes, war, and just about everything else. The great thing about role-playing games is that the Game Master and players are limited only by their imaginations. Anything is possible.

**Roll a Twenty-Sided:** Simply roll a twenty-sided die (1D20) for a number. Typically, the higher the roll the better.

**Roll Percentile:** The roll of two different colored ten-sided dice (2D10), with one color representing tens and the other representing ones. There are also 10-sided dice (D10) available that are already marked in tens (10, 20, 30, etc.), but they are typically only available at game and hobby stores or gaming conventions.

**Roll to Strike:** The roll of a twenty-sided die (1D20) to determine whether or not the attacking character hits his opponent. See the Combat section, starting on page 172, for details.

**Roll with Impact:** Hand to hand combat fighters can reduce the damage received from physical blows and falls by rolling with the force of the impact. If the defender is successful, then only *half damage* is taken from the attack. Roll with punch/fall does not work against energy blasts, bullets, fire, blade weapons, or radiation. Victims must roll higher than the attacker's roll. Falling characters must roll a 14 or higher, on a twenty-sided die, to roll with the fall.

**Run:** Slang for playing a role-playing game. Example: "He runs an excellent campaign," or "I ran in Kevin's game last week," or "You should run a zombie game."

**Saving Throw:** This is a roll (usually on a twenty-sided die) to avoid some unpleasant event. For example: A character might have to roll a saving throw to avoid being overcome by tear gas. The complete list appears below:

Curses: 15 or better.

Disease: 14 or better.

Lethal Poison: 14 or better.

Non-Lethal Poison: 16 or better.

Harmful Drugs: 15 or better.

Acids: No save possible – dodge!

Insanity: 12 or better (sometimes higher).

Magic: 12-16 vs spells. 16+ to save vs ritual magic.

Psionics: Varies; 15 for ordinary people and animals.

**Scenario:** This is a specific adventure in which the player characters engage in adventure and building a story while role-playing. A scenario is usually a story with a beginning (hearing about the criminal), a middle (tracking down the criminal's hide-out), and an end (defeating the criminal). Most campaigns are developed around a number of scenarios.

**S.D.C.:** This stands for *Structural Damage Capacity*, which is the amount of damage an object can absorb before breaking. Living creatures also have S.D.C.; it represents their physical resistance to damage. All the S.D.C. of a living thing must be reduced to zero before the Hit Points can be affected by normal attacks.

**Simultaneous Attack:** Instead of defending with a parry, dodge or entangle, a character can choose to do a simultaneous attack. In this case, the character does not defend ("Go ahead, hit me; I can take it!") and simply attacks in response. The advantage of a simultaneous attack is that neither opponent can parry, dodge or entangle. In all probability, both will take damage. Exception: An opponent skilled with Paired Weapons can engage in simultaneous attack (with one weapon) AND parry (with the other), OR both the paired weapons can be used to strike with NO parry.

**Skill Check/Roll Under Your Skill:** A *skill check* is rolled to determine if the character successfully performed a specific skill. The character must roll *under* his current skill ability (Base Skill, any applicable bonus, plus level advancement). **For example:** A character with the Surveillance skill gets the base skill of 30% but also a +20% bonus for his occupation and because he is third level, an additional +10% (+5% per level of experience starting at level two), for a total of 60%. Rolling a 01-60 on percentile dice means he has successfully performed that skill. **Note:** You don't have to do the math every time you use a skill. Make a photocopy of the character sheet or write the stats on a piece of paper and add everything up when you first create the character. Write the numbers in pencil so you can change them/increase them as the character grows and his skills improve with experience.

**Sneak Attack:** An attacker may lie in wait (ambush), attack from behind, or sneak up (Prowl) on an opponent. If the foe does not discover the attacker, then the sneak attack is success-

ful. The sneak attacker always has initiative, and the defender is not able to parry or dodge the sneak attack.

**Strike:** Anyone attempting to hit an opponent must roll to strike. As with all combat rolls, a roll to strike is made with a twenty-sided die.

**Throw:** Simply, this means throwing a weapon or object. Rolling to throw is exactly the same as rolling to strike, except that there are different bonuses per weapon type. See Weapon Proficiency.

**Using Weapons:** A character may use *any* type of weapon, from a gun to a knife or a rock, but gets no combat bonuses, such as strike or parry, unless he has a *Weapon Proficiency (W.P.)* in that particular weapon. This applies to modern and ancient weapons.



## An Endless Megaverse®

All of Palladium's role-playing games use the same basic rules. That means all our games have things like the Eight Attributes, S.D.C. Hit Points, I.S.P., P.P.E., Experience Levels, combat system, terminology, etc. Learn one Palladium RPG and you can play any of our games. Which is where the slogan – *One game system, a Megaverse® of adventure* – comes from.

We do tweak and tailor aspects of the rules a little for each *world setting*. **Dead Reign™** uses the same approach and rules as **Beyond the Supernatural™ 2nd Edition**. However, **Dead Reign™** does not include the rules for magic or psionics because it is not a part of the Zombie Apocalypse setting. However, because the two games are interchangeable, you can easily incorporate psionics and magic by adapting the rules and material from **Beyond the Supernatural™ 2nd Edition** to **Dead Reign™**.

# Skill Rules

**Dead Reign™** has both characters whose skills are determined by the (*Post-Apocalyptic*) *Occupational Character Class (O.C.C.)* and *Ordinary People* (the same as the **Beyond the Supernatural™ Two RPG**).

## Occupational Character Classes (O.C.C.)

**O.C.C.s are easy.** The *Post-Apocalyptic O.C.C.s* are specific occupations that have grown out of the Zombie Apocalypse. Skills are as indicated under each **Post-Apocalyptic O.C.C.** description: Half-Living, Hound Master, Reaper, Scrounger, Shepherd of the Damned, and Apocalyptic Soldier.

**Ordinary People/Survivor O.C.C.** is handled a little differently. They are ordinary people, like you and me, who have survived extraordinary circumstances. The day before the Wave struck, the character may have been a college student, factory worker, mechanic, office clerk, doctor, computer tech, artist or game designer. After the dead rose and civilization collapsed, the character must make do with his old skills in a nightmare world. In this case, skills are determined by selecting one of the *42 occupations* listed under the Survivor O.C.C. Skills vary according to occupation. Each occupation indicates which skills the character has and additional skills to be selected.

## Selecting Skills

**Step One** is rolling up the character's eight attributes. This is important, because certain skills may compensate for a low attribute. For example, many Physical skills offer bonuses that boost physical attributes (P.S., P.P. P.E., Spd, and S.D.C.) with bonuses from those skills.

**Step Two is choosing a Post-Apocalypse O.C.C. (Occupational Character Class) or Ordinary Person.** You can NOT select skills without knowing your O.C.C., because you are probably going to want to tailor the skills to the orientation and occupation of the character.

**Step Three, Skill Selection.** Most characters have a broad range of skills. Choose additional available skills that make the most sense for the *Dead Reign* setting.

**Some Skill Considerations:** Some characters are likely to pick up two or more **Physical skills**. It is important to note that Physical skill bonuses are *accumulative*. It is perfectly acceptable for players to pick numerous Physical skills in order to “beef up” their character, many providing some kind of combat bonus (to strike, parry, etc.), extra S.D.C., or a bonus to a physical attribute. **Note:** *Acrobatics* and *Gymnastics* provide similar abilities and bonuses. If both are selected, add the bonuses and pluses to your overall character as explained. However, abilities such as back flip, climb rope, etc., are not added together, nor is the educational bonus added twice. The “best” proficiency of a duplicated skill ability is taken, and the normal educational bonus is applied. Also, the Prowl and Climb skills given under *Acrobatics* and *Gymnastics* are a part of these skills and do not increase with level unless they are selected as separate, additional areas of training (i.e., Prowl and/or Climb are also selected as skills).

Throughout a character's history, he will probably train in some form of **Hand to Hand Combat**. Note that only *one* form of hand to hand combat may be selected. In cases where more than one type is available, the player must select *one* and disregard the others. Hand to Hand Combat is seldom part of an occupation unless that occupation involves the *military, law enforcement, or sports*, which means most other characters need to select Hand to Hand Combat as an *Elective Skill*.

**Guns & Weapon Proficiencies (W.P.)**. Although it is extremely handy to have a character who is good with one or more weapons, not all Survivors, even in the zombie infested world of *Dead Reign*, will become gun-toting survivalists or gun bunnies. Try to play in character and put yourself in that character's position. If you were a doctor, nurse or school teacher, would *you* have a gun? In this deadly world of the living dead the answer is probably an emphatic YES! And we would tend to agree, but that character is probably only likely to have 1-3 gun based *Modern Weapon Proficiencies (W.P.)* and perhaps, 1-2 Ancient W.P.s – not 8, 10 or 15 Weapon Proficiencies. Remember, these are *ordinary people* adapting to a terrifying world, not soldiers, not scouts, not dedicated zombie killers (we have specific O.C.C.s for those characters), but ordinary folk. Oh, and when it comes to guns and other weapons, some characters *may* not want one even if they can get them, and those who do carry weapons are wise to be discreet and careful with them.

## Four Ranges of Skills

Each character has four ranges or classes of skills.

**Common Skills**, basic things anyone with even a rudimentary education will have, such as being able to read and write, count numbers and drive a car. Either a character has them or he doesn't – and 98% of all characters have these common, modern-life skills, regardless of their occupation.

*Mathematics: Basic* – Can count and do simple math.

*Language: Native Tongue* – Speaks the common, local language.

*Literacy: Native Language* – Reads and writes local language.

*Drive Automobile* – your everyday car.

**Bonuses for Common Skills:**

Unskilled Occupation: None.

Highly Skilled Occupation: +4% to Language and Literacy, +10% to Basic Math.

**Occupational Skills** come with one's chosen "occupation" and are required to do the job. These usually get the highest skill bonus. The more skilled the occupation, the greater the number of *Occupational* and *Elective Skills*. The less skilled the occupation the fewer *Occupational* and *Elective Skills* and the greater the number of *Secondary* (informally learned) skills.

Pick an occupation, and you get a set of skills required to do the job as well as a few skills related to work and may include skills that are not available as an *Elective*. Each skill has a bonus indicated in parentheses. The skills that most relate to one's occupation have the highest bonuses.

The Occupation also indicates the number of *Elective* and *Secondary Skill* selections the character can make.

**Elective Skills**, supplemental work skills and/or other areas of interest or skills acquired through formal education and training. This may include survival, combat and weapon skills learned since the onset of the *Zombie Apocalypse*. These typically get modest skill bonuses. The exact number of *Elective Skills* are indicated under each occupation. However, only certain skill categories may be available and others excluded. Any specific restrictions or exceptions, as well as any applicable skill bonuses, are indicated.

Below is a list of skills, by category, that *can usually be selected as Elective Skills* for any occupation. Skill categories that are not normally available, such as *Espionage, Military and Rogue skills*, *may* be allowed for specific O.C.C.s and will be indicated. Some *skills* also provide an additional bonus to other, related skills. All skill bonuses are accumulative.

**Communications**: Any.

**Domestic**: Any.

**Electrical**: Basic Electronics and Computer Repair only, unless the occupation allows it.

**Espionage**: None, unless the occupation allows it.

**Horsemanship**: Any.

**Mechanical**: Basic Mechanics, Automotive Mechanics, Locksmith, and Munitions Expert only, unless the occupation allows it.

**Medical**: Animal Husbandry, Brewing, First Aid, Holistic Medicine, and Paramedic only, unless the occupation allows it.

**Military**: None, unless the occupation allows it.

**Physical**: Any, except *Acrobatics, Wrestling, Assassin or Commando*, unless the occupation allows it. Selecting *Martial Arts* counts as *three* skill selections as an *Elective skill* unless the occupation allows it.

**Rogue**: None, unless the occupation allows it.

**Science**: Any.

**Technical**: Any.

**Transportation**: Any.

**W.P. Ancient**: Any.

**W.P. Modern**: Handguns, Rifles, Shotgun and Submachine-gun only, unless the occupation (such as *military or law enforcement*) allows others.

**Wilderness**: Any.

**Secondary Skills** are additional areas of interest the character picked up along the way in school, from friends or siblings, or self-taught through hobbies and other interests. These skills have no bonuses other than a possible I.Q. bonus for having an *Intelligence* attribute number of 16 or higher.

They may be related to the character's occupation or reflect completely other interests and hobbies. *Secondary Skills* usually are self-taught and do not command the same degree of expertise as *Occupational* and *Elective Skills*. For Example: If a character took the *Art* skill as an *Elective Skill*, he would have the ability of a professional artist. If that same character takes *Art* as a *Secondary Skill*, however, his ability is that of a talented amateur. Even if a *Secondary Skill* artist had a higher chance of success than an *Elective Skill* artist, the *Elective Skill* artist's work always looks better. That is the essential difference between *Elective* and *Secondary Skills*, other than the fact that not all

skills are available as Secondary Skills (i.e. the average person cannot self-teach Espionage or Military skills, etc.).

**Below is a list of skills, by category, that can be selected as Secondary Skills.** No skill bonuses apply, because these skills are self-taught and do not include intensive or professional training. Certain skills (e.g., most Military skills) cannot be learned as Secondary Skills. All Secondary Skills start out at the base skill level.

**Communications:** Any, except Electronic Countermeasures, Laser Communication, Optic Systems, or Sensory Equipment.

**Domestic:** Any.

**Electrical:** Basic Electronics only.

**Espionage:** None.

**Horsemanship:** Basic only.

**Mechanical:** Basic Mechanics and Automotive Mechanics only.

**Medical:** Animal Husbandry, Brewing, and First Aid only.

**Military:** None.

**Physical:** Any, except Acrobatics, Gymnastics, Boxing, Kick Boxing, Wrestling and any Hand to Hand Combat skill, except Basic.

**Rogue:** Gambling and Streetwise only.

**Science:** Astronomy & Navigation and Advanced Mathematics only.

**Technical:** Any.

**Transportation:** Any, except Aircraft (all), Ships/Seamanship and Combat Driving.

**W.P. Ancient:** Archery, Axe, Blunt, Chain, Knife, Shield, and Staff only.

**W.P. Modern:** Handguns, Rifles and Shotgun only.

**Wilderness:** Any, except Herding, Spelunking and Wilderness Survival.

## Skill Bonuses

The base skill level is denoted in each skill description. Bonuses received by one's occupation are added to that base skill. This is a one time skill bonus. Characters may also have an I.Q. attribute bonus, and sometimes skills provide bonuses that are added to the base skill level of other skills as a one time bonus.

As the character advances in level of experience, his chances of performing skills successfully (his success ratio) will increase. This is not so much a bonus as a designation of increased mastery of one's abilities with time and experience. The amount that the skill level increases is also noted in each skill description. For example: The Physical skill of Swim reads: **Base Skill:** 50% +5% per level of experience. This means that a first level character without an occupational bonus has a base skill proficiency of 50%. At second level +5% is added to increase the skill to 55%, at third level it increases to 60%, and so on. If a +10% occupation bonus was applicable, the base skill starts at 60% +5% per level (i.e., 65% at second level, 70% at third, and so on).

**New Skills.** As the character advances in experience, he *may* also learn additional skills along the way. All new skills begin with a first level success ratio. Thus, if a 5th level character learns a new skill, that new skill is performed at first level profi-

ciency while all his other skills are performed at 5th level proficiency. When the character reaches 6th level, his new skill will be at 2nd level while all of his others will be at 6th level. **Note:** The maximum success ratio for any skill is 98%, regardless of how far the character advances or what modifiers he may enjoy. Humans are not perfect, so there is always a margin for error.

## Skill Penalties

Ordinarily, a character's chance of performing a skill successfully is determined by his success ratio for that skill. However, when high stress, pressure situations are involved, or the character is scared or extremely angry, one's success ratio for a given skill is lowered. Likewise, disease, illness, fatigue, drugs, poison and injury may also impose a skill penalty on the character. Whether these penalties are accumulative (we suggest they are) is left to the discretion of the Game Master.

**Pressure Situations:** Executing a skill when calm, cool and collected is one thing. Doing it under the gun (or with a moaning zombie breathing down your neck) is something else. For the following pressure situations, negative modifiers apply to characters trying to execute any skill, excluding W.P. and Hand to Hand combat skills.

Cheap, faulty, insufficient and/or unfamiliar tools: -5% to -15%.

Countermeasures, traps and alarms are in place: -10% to -15%, depending on their level of complexity and sophistication.

Difficult, complex or unfamiliar task: -10% to -15%.

Distracted by outside forces: -10% to -20%, depending upon the source of the distraction and how invasive it may be.

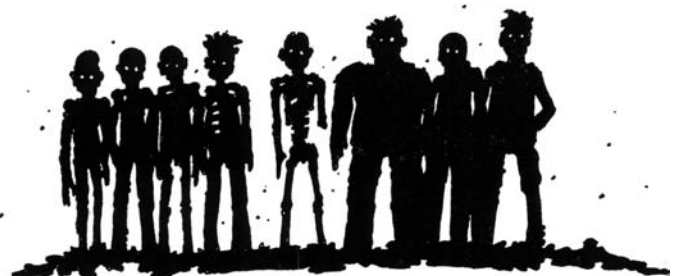
Frightened or jumpy: -5% to -10%.

Lack of sleep/exhausted: -10% if the character has gone 24-36 hours without sleep plus the skill takes 50% longer to perform; -20% having gone 48-72 hours without sleep and the skill takes twice as long to perform, and -30-50% having gone 80 hours or longer without sleep, plus the skill takes three times as long as normal to perform.

Pressure situation, low: -5%, and includes being nervous when working in front of a superior, critic, or a pretty girl, as well as when trying to show off.

Pressure situation, moderate: -10% when it is important to get the job done quickly and done right the first time. Time is of the essence.

Pressure situation, serious: -15% to -20% when failure means there will be serious consequences, losses (of equipment, critical supplies, reputation) or trouble (could lead to capture, torture, loss of critical equipment or clue, or opportunity, etc.), or the





character himself or several people (perhaps hundreds) will suffer for his mistake.

Pressure situation, deadly: -25% to -30%. Time is running out and dire consequences hang over the character like the Sword of Damocles. If the character fails, he, an ally(s) or innocent people will be seriously hurt or killed! Always a -30% penalty if a loved one or several dozen, or hundreds or thousands of lives hang in the balance.

Panic situation: If the character panics and gets hysterical the penalty is -50% on skill performance, combat bonuses are reduced by half, Perception Roll bonuses are reduced to zero, and shooting a gun is “wild.” Bystanders and allies may get injured accidentally from the character’s wild and irrational response.

Scared: -30% to -50%. The character is so scared he just cannot think straight, plus the skill takes twice as long to accomplish. Increase the penalty to -75% when the subject of the terror is related to a Phobia insanity. Note that although the character is wracked with fear, he is trying to deal with it and has not run off in a blind panic.

Seriously wounded or ill: When a character’s Hit Points are down by 50% or more, concentration is difficult (feels weak, tired, in pain, etc.) and the pain and fatigue are distracting which impairs skill performance: -20% penalty. The penalty worsens to -30% when the character has less than 25% of his Hit Points.

Illness, especially fever, can cause similar penalties. Debilitating illness will usually indicate skill penalties ranging from -10% to -50%. **Note:** The description of some illnesses will indicate the symptoms and penalties from that particular malady. Drugs or poison may also stun, confuse or debilitate the character similar to injury and illness. The specific drug will indicate the penalties to apply.

Trying to do something while moving: -5% to -40%, depending on the situation, speed and the bumpiness of the ride, and the complexity of what is trying to be done.

**Note:** The G.M. may also impose a *reasonable penalty* to any situation where the character faces an unusual or difficult task. A reasonable penalty will range from -5% to -30%, but, at times, a dramatically higher penalty may be appropriate. G.M.s, use your discretion and be fair.

**Advanced, Unknown, or Alien Machines and Technologies:** A good rule of thumb is a skill penalty of -30% or -40% when trying to figure out, operate, repair, or use such mechanisms and technologies beyond the normal range of technology. This would include most experimental military devices, strange magic items, devices from an alien world and things that fall into the category of *weird science*. The G.M. should always use his/her discretion in these situations.

## Skills

One of the nice features about most Palladium role-playing games is the many different ways in which players can *customize their characters*. Skills play a big part in that, because they let each player tailor his character to his desires and make characters of the same O.C.C. different and unique.

The **Base Skill** percentages for some skills are higher than some of Palladium’s other role-playing games. This reflects the

high level of education and training available to most characters in our *modern world*.

This section contains two presentations for skills:

**1. Skill List.** A comprehensive list of the names of every skill by category, followed by the skill’s *base percentage* and the *additional percentage per level of experience*. The list is a quick and easy visual reference for picking skills and determining their percentage.

**2. Skill Descriptions.** Every skill is described in full. Only skills most appropriate to a modern setting are presented.

## Skill List

### Communication Skills

Barter (30%+4%)  
Creative Writing (25%+5%)  
Cryptography (25%+5%)  
Electronic Countermeasures (30%+5%)  
Language: Native Tongue (88%+1%)  
Language: Other (50%+3%)  
Laser Communications (30%+5%)  
Literacy: Native Language (80%+2%)  
Literacy: Other (40%+5%)  
Optic Systems (30%+5%)  
Performance (25%+5%)  
Public Speaking (30%+5%)  
Radio: Basic (50%+5%)  
Sensory Equipment (30%+5%)  
Sign Language (25%+5%)  
Sing (35%+5%)  
Surveillance (30%+5%)  
T.V./Video (35%+5%)

### Domestic Skills

Brewing (25%/30%+5%)  
Cook (35%+5%)  
Dance (30%+5%)  
Fishing (40%+5%)  
Gardening (36%+4%)  
Housekeeping (35%+5%)  
Play Musical Instrument (35%+5%)  
Recycle (30%+5%)  
Sewing (40%+5%)  
Sing (35%+5%)  
Wardrobe & Grooming (50%+4%)

### Electrical Skills

Basic Electronics (30%+5%)  
Computer Repair (30%+5%)  
Electrical Engineer (35%+5%)  
Electricity Generation (50%+5%)  
Robot Electronics (30%+5%)

## Espionage Skills

Detect Ambush (30%+5%)  
Detect Concealment (25%+5%)  
Disguise (25%+5%)  
Escape Artist (30%+5%)  
Forgery (20%+5%)  
Impersonation (30%/16%+4%)  
Intelligence (32%+4%)  
Interrogation (30%+5%)  
Pick Locks (30%+5%)  
Pick Pockets (25%+5%)  
Sniper  
Tracking (people) (25%+5%)  
Undercover Ops (30%+5%)  
Wilderness Survival (30%+5%)

## Horsemanship Skills

Horsemanship: General (40%/20%+4%)  
Horsemanship: Cowboy/Elite (66%/50%+3%)  
Horsemanship: Exotic Animals (30%/20%+4%)

## Mechanical Skills

Aircraft Mechanics (50%+4%)  
Automotive Mechanics (60%+3%)  
Basic Mechanics (40%+5%)  
Locksmith (35%+5%)  
Mechanical Engineer (30%+5%)  
Munitions Expert (40%+5%)  
Robot Mechanics (30%+5%)  
Vehicle Armorer (30%+5%)  
Weapons Engineer (30%+5%)

## Medical Skills

Animal Husbandry (40%+5%)  
Brewing: Medicinal (25%/30%+5%)  
Crime Scene Investigation (35%+5%)  
First Aid (45%+5%)  
Forensics (35%+5%)  
Holistic Medicine (30%/20%+5%)  
Medical Doctor (60%/50%+4%)  
Paramedic (40%+5%)  
Pathology (40%+5%)  
Psychology (35%+5%)  
Toxicology (40%+5%)  
Veterinary Science (50%+4%)

## Military Skills

Aircraft: Combat Helicopters (52%+3%)  
Aircraft: Jet Fighters (50%+3%)  
APCs & Tanks (50%+3%)  
Armorer/Field Armorer (40%+5%)

Camouflage (20%+5%)  
Demolitions (60%+3%)  
Demolitions Disposal (60%+3%)  
Demolitions: Underwater (56%+4%)  
Find Contraband (26%+4%)  
Forced March  
Military Etiquette (35%+5%)  
NBC Warfare (35%+5%)  
Recognize Weapon Quality (25%+5%)  
Trap/Mine Detection (20%+5%)

## Physical Skills

No Hand to Hand Combat Skill  
Hand to Hand: Basic  
Hand to Hand: Expert  
Hand to Hand: Martial Arts  
Hand to Hand: Assassin  
Hand to Hand: Commando  
Acrobatics (varies)  
Aerobic Athletics  
Athletics (General)  
Body Building & Weight Lifting  
Boxing  
Climb (40%/30%+5%)  
Fencing  
Forced March  
Gymnastics (varies)  
Juggling (35%+5%)  
Kick Boxing  
Outdoorsmanship  
Physical Labor  
Prowl (25%+5%)  
Running  
Swim (50%+5%)  
S.C.U.B.A. (50%+5%)  
Wrestling

## Rogue Skills

Cardsharp (24%+4%)  
Computer Hacking (20%+5%)  
Concealment (20%+4%)  
Find Contraband (26%+4%)  
Gambling (Standard) (30%+5%)  
Gambling (Dirty Tricks) (20%+4%)  
I.D. Undercover Agent (30%+4%)  
Imitate Voice & Sounds (42%/36%+4%)  
Palming (20%+5%)  
Pick Locks (30%+5%)  
Pick Pockets (25%+5%)  
Prowl (25%+5%)  
Roadwise (26%+4%)

Safecracking (20%+4%)  
Seduction (20%+3%, plus attribute bonuses)  
Streetwise (20%+4%)  
Tailing (30%+5%)

## Science Skills

Anthropology (40%+5%)  
Archaeology (40%/20%+5%)  
Artificial Intelligence (30%+3%)  
Astronomy & Navigation (30%+5%)  
Astrophysics (35%+5%)  
Biology (40%+5%)  
Botany (40%+5%)  
Chemistry (50%+5%)  
Chemistry: Analytical (35%+5%)  
Chemistry: Pharmaceutical (40%+5%)  
Genetics (30%+3%)  
Mathematics: Basic (72%+3%)  
Mathematics: Advanced (64%+2%)  
Parapsychology (30%+5%)  
Psychology (35%+5%)  
Zoology (30%+5%)

## Technical Skills

Appraise Goods (30%+5)  
Art (35%+5%)  
Barter (30%+4%)  
Breed Dogs (40%/20%+5%)  
Business & Finance (35%+5%)  
Computer Operation (60%+3%)  
Computer Programming (50%+3%)  
Excavation (30%+5%)  
Firefighting (40%+5%)  
Gemology (25%+5%)  
General Repair & Maintenance (45%+5%)  
History (60%/40%+4%)  
Jury-Rig (25%+5%)  
Law (General) (35%+5%)  
Leather Working (45%+5%)  
Masonry (40%+5%)  
Meditation (30%+5%)  
Mining (35%+5%)  
Navigation (40%+5%)  
Philosophy (40%+5%)  
Photography (35%+5%)  
Prospecting (20%+5%)  
Recycling (30%+5%)  
Research (40%+5%)  
Rope Works (30%+5%)  
Salvage (35%+5%)  
Technical Writing (30%+5%)

Ventriloquism (16%+4%)  
Whittling & Sculpting (30%+5%)

## Transportation Skills

Aircraft: Helicopter (52%+3%)  
Aircraft: Jet (60%+3%)  
Airplanes: Propeller Types (50%+4%)  
Automobile (60%+3%)  
Bicycling (60%+3%)  
Boat: Motor, Race & Hydrofoil (55%+5%)  
Boat: Sail Types (60%+5%)  
Boat: Ships/Seamanship (35%/20%+5%)  
Combat Driving  
Kayaking & Canoeing (50%+5%)  
Motorcycles & Snowmobiles (60%+4%)  
Skateboard (40%+5%)  
Tracked Vehicles (54%+4%)  
Truck (56%+4%)  
Water Scooters (50%+5%)  
Water Skiing & Surfing (40%+4%)

## Weapon Proficiencies (Ancient)

W.P. Archery  
W.P. Axe  
W.P. Blunt  
W.P. Chain  
W.P. Forked  
W.P. Grappling Hook  
W.P. Knife  
W.P. Paired Weapons  
W.P. Pole Arm  
W.P. Quick Draw  
W.P. Shield  
W.P. Slingshot  
W.P. Spear  
W.P. Staff  
W.P. Sword  
W.P. Targeting  
W.P. Whip

## Weapon Proficiencies (Modern)

W.P. Handguns  
W.P. Rifles  
W.P. Shotgun  
W.P. Submachine-Gun  
W.P. Heavy Military Weapons  
W.P. Military Flamethrowers  
W.P. Trick Shooting

## Wilderness Skills

Boat Building (25%+5%)

Carpentry (25%+5%)  
 Dowsing (20%+5%)  
 Fasting (40%+3%)  
 Herding (30%+5%)  
 Hunting  
 Identify Plants & Fruit (25%+5%)  
 Land Navigation (36%+4%)  
 Preserve Food (30%+5%)  
 Skin & Prepare Animal Hides (30%+5%)  
 Spelunking (35%+5%)  
 Track & Trap Animals (20%/30%+5%)  
 Wilderness Survival (30%+5%)

# Skill Descriptions

## Communication Skills

**Barter:** A skill at bargaining with merchants, businessmen, thieves, traders and other characters to get a fair price or fair exchange of trade goods or services. Depending on the character's point of view and effort at bartering, he can raise the amount he gets or lower the price he pays by 3D6+2%; not applicable to rare and exotic items or advanced technology. Generally, if the haggler rolls under his Bartering skill percentage, he gets the discount when buying or the better price when he is the one doing the selling or trading. If the price is disputed, the two bartering characters can each make rolls on percentile dice, the highest roll wins and gets their price and not a penny less or nickle more. **Base Skill:** 30% +4% per level of experience.

**Creative Writing.** The ability to write prose/stories, poems, and journalistic reports, studies, news, and otherwise entertaining text. Taking the skill twice indicates a professional quality and gets a bonus of +10%. Selecting it once indicates a talented amateur. A failed roll means an awkward and poorly written work that is boring and difficult to understand. Try again. **Base Skill:** 25% +5% per level of experience. **Requires:** *Literacy*. This skill does not provide a character with the ability to recite his or her written words with any level of charm. See *Public Speaking* for that.

**Cryptography.** Skill in recognizing, designing, and cracking secret codes and messages. The character must study the code for two hours to attempt to break it successfully. A failed roll means the individual must study the code for an additional two hours before he can try to break it again. The character may attempt to break the code sooner, after only 10 minutes of study, but suffers a penalty of -30%. **Base Skill:** 25% +5% per level of experience. **Requires:** *Literacy*.

**Electronic Countermeasures.** The ability to shield, encrypt and protect electronic transmissions, as well as jamming, scrambling, coding and decoding radio, video and wireless transmissions. This skill also includes knowledge in the use of technology to locate electronic bugs/listening devices and deactivate, undermine and otherwise circumvent them. The use of *electronic masking*, scrambling and unscrambling equipment, as well as codes to help foil the detection, interception and inter-

pretation of radio and wireless transmissions is all part of this skill. A radio operator who makes a successful scramble roll can transmit coded or scrambled messages without fear that the enemy will intercept or understand their transmission.

Jamming military or police communications can cause unit confusion and disrupt communications. Military organization breaks down, causing a loss of effectiveness to all but the best units. Just about any high-powered radio can be used for jamming. Armed with a radio, a small guerrilla unit can completely disrupt the maneuvers of large enemy groups. This skill also enables the radio operator to "follow" the enemy's attempted transmissions over jammed frequencies to trace their location or direction of travel. This tactic is extremely useful in finding and eliminating bugs, transmission units, surveillance teams on a stakeout, small squads and enemies in distress. **Base Skill:** 30% +5% per level of experience. **Requires:** Radio: Basic.

**Language: Native Tongue.** The character has a very good to excellent understanding of his native language. It is not, however, an absolute and total understanding, because there are always words, scientific terms, slang and fancy or outdated words and terms a character may not know. Thus, the necessity for dictionaries, thesauruses, grammar guides and computer spelling programs. **Base Skill:** 88% +1% per level of experience.

**Language: Other.** The character can understand and *speak* in a language other than his own. Language is one of the few skills that can be selected repeatedly in order to speak several different languages. Each selection gives the character knowledge of a different language and costs one skill selection each time. Among the major languages used in international commerce are English, French, Spanish, German, Japanese, Chinese, Korean and Russian. Ancient languages like Greek, Latin, Egyptian, Aramaic, etc., may be appealing or helpful to scholars, and historians. **Base Skill:** 50% +3% per level of experience.

**Laser Communications.** This skill provides the character with an in-depth knowledge of advanced electronics, laser communication systems and fiber optic communications. **Base Skill:** 30% +5% per level of experience. **Requires:** The Radio: Basic, Electrical Engineer, and Computer Operation skills.

**Literacy: Native Language.** The character can read and write the language of his culture, typically where he was born and grew up (or has lived most of his life). For example, most of us born in America speak, read and write American English, complete with contemporary slang. English is the predominant language, and even if our ethnic heritage has roots in another country (Mexico, Poland, Russia, Cuba, etc.) that language is probably considered a "second language" (or "Literacy: Other" in the context of this game) and may not be known at all. I, for one, have never been able to speak more than a few words of Polish and have never been able to read any. **Note:** The Base Skill number is not higher, because not everyone is highly educated or knows his own language one hundred percent (I don't know every word, do you?). Others are just poor at spelling (like a publisher and author who shall go nameless). That's why we have computer spelling programs, dictionaries and the thesaurus. Reading and writing means the character can read and comprehend the written word, signs, written instructions, books, etc. This skill has no bearing on creative writing. **Base Skill:** 80% +2% per level of experience.

**Literacy: Other.** The practiced skill at reading and writing a language other than his own (see Literacy: Native Language). Literacy: Other is one of the few skills that can be selected repeatedly in order to read and comprehend several different languages from around the world. Each selection gives the character knowledge in a different language, but just because he can “read” a foreign language does NOT mean he can speak it or understand others speaking it; only has the most basic understanding of the spoken language, catching one or two words out of ten. (See *Language: Other* to speak other languages.) Each language counts as a separate skill selection. **Base Skill:** 40% +5% per level of experience.

**Optic Systems.** Provides expert training in the use of special optical enhancement equipment such as telescopic lenses, laser targeting, thermal imagers, passive light intensifiers, infrared and ultraviolet systems, polarization, light filters, optical scanners, video and digital cameras, holograms and related devices. **Base Skill:** 30% +5% per level of experience. Adds a special one time bonus of +5% to the T.V./Video skill if both are selected.

**Performance.** The methods and fundamentals used by actors, entertainers, politicians and other public figures to impress and sway the public. A character with this skill knows how to do things with *flair*. If a skill roll is successful, it works like an attempt to charm, captivate, impress, intimidate/alarm or incense (and motivate) the audience. **Base Skill:** 25% +5% per level. **Bonus:** +5% to the Undercover Ops and Impersonation skills. **Note:** Obvious lies, inconsistencies and evidence to the contrary may ruin the effectiveness of the best performance. G.M.s, use your discretion.

**Public Speaking.** Training in the quality of sound, tone, pitch, enunciation, clarity, and pace when speaking to the public. The character speaks loudly, distinctly and in a pleasing manner. Also includes the practice of good, enticing storytelling, pacing, dramatic pauses and composition of the spoken word. A successful roll indicates the overall quality and charisma of the speaker and spoken word is good to excellent, and people are enjoying listening to him. **Base Skill:** 30% +5% per level of experience. This skill adds a +5% bonus to the Performance skill.

**Radio: Basic.** The rudimentary knowledge in the operation and maintenance of all sorts of radio equipment, including military radio systems, field radios and walkie-talkies, audio recording devices, wire laying, installation, radio procedure, communication security and Morse code. It does not include the ability to make repairs or operate video equipment. **Base Skill:** 50% +5% per level of experience.

**Sensory Equipment:** Individuals with this training can operate, maintain, understand, and “read” or interpret sensory data from all types of conventional, military, medical and scientific equipment, scanners, and sensory devices. These devices include radar, sonar, motion detectors, surveillance equipment, optical enhancements, industrial gauges, instrument panels, medical monitors (EKGs, CAT scans, etc.), life support systems, and so on. Note that characters without this skill cannot understand or operate advanced aircraft, medical equipment or detection/surveillance equipment.

**Radar & Sonar Note:** The character can expertly use radar (radio echo bounces) and sonar (underwater sound echo

bounces) equipment and correctly read the information to precisely locate and track aircraft, ships and submarines, as the case may be. In submarines (and radar for warships and fighter aircraft) there are two methods or types of operations, *passive* and *active*. To use active sonar, the sub must give a pulse of sound to bounce off any nearby ships or objects. This is very dangerous since it immediately gives away the position of the submersible itself. Most vessels will not use active sonar unless absolutely necessary. Most will rely on passive sonar systems. This is much more difficult since the sonar operator must sift through the background noise to find any enemy ships. Sometimes they will not be able to distinguish the location of a ship from the background static. Despite this fact, passive sonar is used because it does not give away the location of the vessel. -15% skill penalty when using passive sonar or radar. **Base Skill:** 30% +5% per level of experience.

**Sign Language.** This skill is either a) the universal sign language of the deaf, or b) the military sign language of hand signals used to indicate action, response and combat positions in the field when verbal or radio communication would alert the enemy. Both require line of sight (i.e., one must be able to see the signer). Signing for the hearing impaired requires the sender to do a skill check per every 20 words “signed” to successfully transmit his message. Likewise, the interpreter must roll to interpret every batch of 20 words. A failed roll means a misunderstanding to no idea of what has been said. **Base Skill:** 25% +5% per level of experience.

**Sing:** The simple ability to read music and carry a pleasant tune. **Base Skill:** 35% +5% per level of experience.

**Surveillance.** The use and deployment of bugs and spy equipment, tailing and stakeouts. The character understands the methods, operation, techniques, tools and devices in using surveillance systems. Includes motion detectors, simple and complex alarm systems, audio/visual recording and display equipment, recording methods, amplified sound systems, miniature listening devices (bugs, line tapping, parabolic electronic ears, etc.), miniature “hidden” cameras, and optical enhancement systems specifically as they relate to camera lenses and spy devices.

A failed roll in the use of surveillance *equipment* means that the equipment does not function as desired, impairing or preventing surveillance; i.e., the bug does not transmit, recording or sound transmissions are garbled, surveillance film is blurred or failed to record, etc.

A failed roll when *hiding* surveillance devices means the bug does not function and is easily discovered through the course of casual activity.

*Tailing*, or following someone without their knowledge, is another form of surveillance. This also includes stakeout procedures. A failed surveillance roll indicates that the subject has spotted “the tail” and is aware that he is being followed/observed.

**Base Skill:** 30% +5% per level of experience. **Requires:** *Basic Electronics* or *Electrical Engineering*, *Computer Operation* and *Literacy* (the latter two are needed only for complex, high-tech systems).

**TV/Video.** In-depth training in the use of video, digital and audio recording equipment as well as filming, editing, dubbing,

title making, duplication, and transmission. Includes the use of field equipment; i.e., portable video or digital camera and studio equipment. **Base Skill:** 35% +5% per level of experience.

## Domestic Skills

**Note:** Characters can attain professional quality by selecting the same Domestic skill twice. Add a one time bonus of +10% and note that the end result is of superior quality.

**Brewing: Basic.** This is the making of fermented alcoholic beverages from grains or fruits. This specifically includes wine, mead, ale, beer and moonshine, as well as common teas, coffee, lemonade and similar types of prepared drinks. Stronger types of alcohol, such as brandy, rum, and whiskey, are not included, nor are champagnes or fine wines. The first percentile number indicates the chance of success (a failed roll means an undrinkable concoction). The second indicates the quality of the brew; the higher the number, the tastier the drink. **Base Skill:** 25%/30% +5% per level of experience. Adds a +5% to the Holistic Medicine if the skill is known.

**Cook.** Skill in selecting, planning, and preparing meals. A cooking roll failure means that the food is not properly prepared.



It is edible but tastes lousy (greasy, too spicy, sickeningly sweet, sour, burnt, leaves a bad aftertaste in the mouth, etc.). **Base Skill:** 35% +5% per level of experience.

**Dance.** A practiced skill in the art of dancing, the character is especially smooth and graceful; a joy to dance with. Can learn new dance steps/moves much more quickly than somebody who cannot dance. **Base Skill:** 30% +5% per level of experience.

**Fishing.** The fundamental methods and enjoyment of the relaxing sport of fishing. Areas of knowledge include the use of lures, bait, poles, hooks, lines, and the cleaning and preparation of fish for eating. Also includes a basic knowledge of freshwater fish, their habits and taste. **Base Skill:** 40% +5% per level of experience.

**Gardening.** This skill offers a basic understanding of plant care and aesthetic garden design as well as the ability to grow garden crops, and the skill to create beautiful, decorative gardens with flowers, plants, shrubs, trees, and decorative rocks that create a feeling of tranquility and harmony with nature (Zen Gardening). This skill can be practiced by anyone. **Base Skill:** 36% +4% per level of experience.

**Housekeeping.** Techniques and methods of cleaning clothes, bedding, bathrooms, floors, and surfaces, as well as knowledge in the types of cleansers, solvents, soaps and materials for housekeeping. Professional maintenance personnel, maids, and hotel housekeepers will know additional “tricks of the trade” to make a room look spotless, sparkling and inviting; everything in its place, folded properly and presented attractively. **Base Skill:** 35% +5% per level of experience.

**Play Musical Instrument.** The individual has learned to play a particular musical instrument with a fair amount of skill. The sound is generally pleasant (except when a bad roll is made). Note that each specific instrument requires a separate selection of this skill. **For example:** A character who wants to play the guitar, violin, and harmonica must select the Play Musical Instrument skill three different times. **Base Skill:** 35% +5% per level of experience.

**Recycle.** Knowledge of materials and scraps that have value when recycled, and methods of collecting, cleaning and storing recycled goods. Recycling typically includes paper, lumber, plastic, glass, aluminum (cans, etc.), scrap metal, electrical wiring, circuit boards, and spare electronic and machine parts. **Note:** If the character also has Basic Mechanics (or a superior Mechanic’s skill) he can strip down a damaged machine or object of its *basic component parts* and knows what to gather to make useful materials to repair an existing machine or build something new. Includes a very rudimentary understanding of metallurgy. **Base Skill:** 30% +5% per level of experience.

**Sewing.** The practiced skill with the needle and thread to mend clothing, do minor alterations, and layout, cut and sew simple patterns. This is not a tailoring ability, but can become tailoring if the player selects this skill twice. **Base Skill:** 40% +5% per level of experience.

**Sing:** The simple ability to read music and carry a pleasant tune. **Base Skill:** 35% +5% per level of experience.

**Wardrobe & Grooming.** This skill represents a desire and active attempt to improve one’s overall appearance, image and “look” through the selection of just the right style of clothing, make-up, hair style, perfume, walk, talk and how one carries



him or herself. In short, this is how to dress to kill or make the right impression. Keeps an eye on fashion and trends. **Base Skill:** 50% +4% per level of experience. **Bonuses:** +1 to the P.B. attribute when dressed to impress, as well as +2% bonus to the skills of Disguise, Impersonation, Performance, Undercover Ops and Seduction.

## Electrical Skills

**Basic Electronics.** This is a rudimentary understanding of the principles of electricity, simple circuits, wiring, and so on. This person can do basic wiring, repair appliances, and read schematics as well as assist electrical engineers. **Base Skill:** 30% +5% per level of experience.

**Computer Repair.** Knowledge of the internal electronics of computers and related devices (terminals, printers, modems, monitors, circuit boards, etc.). The character can attempt to repair or sabotage computers. Note that figuring out the repair or sabotage procedure counts as one roll, and the actual repair is a second roll. A failed roll means the repair is faulty and does not

work (try again). No computer operation or programming skills are included nor required to fix computers. Many computer repair personnel don't even know how to turn the computer on! **Base Skill:** 30% +5% per level of experience.

**Electrical Engineer.** Knowledge of electricity. Characters can diagnose and locate electrical problems, repair complex electrical devices, wire entire buildings or vehicles, and build electrical equipment. The character can also attempt to bypass security systems, alarms, and surveillance systems, but at a penalty of -20% for simple systems and -50% for complex systems (reduce these penalties by half if the character also has the *Surveillance* skill). **Base Skill:** 35% +5% per level of experience. **Requires:** *Advanced Mathematics* and *Literacy*. **Note:** There is a -30% penalty when working on alien or extremely unfamiliar electronics.

**Electricity Generation.** Electricity is generated in a variety of ways: from sunlight, wind and hydro systems (using solar panels, windmills and water turbines) to batteries, combustion engines and generators. This skill gives the character the understanding of how and why these generation systems work and he is able to use, link and repair such motors, turbines and generator systems, but not to build them from scratch. **Base Skill:** 50% +5% per level of experience. **Requires:** *Basic Math* and at least *Basic Electronics* and *Basic Mechanics*. -40% skill penalty when working on very advanced or alien systems.

**Robot Electronics.** A specialization in the area of micro-circuitry, military engineering, robotics, advanced computers, artificial intelligence, and even experimental bionic systems. **Base Skill:** 30% +5% per level of experience. **Requires:** *Electrical Engineering* and *Computer Programming*. There is a -40% penalty when working on alien or extremely unfamiliar robot electronics.

## Espionage Skills

**Detect Ambush.** Training which develops an eye for spotting locations and terrains suitable for ambushes and being ambushed. It also provides a rudimentary knowledge of guerilla tactics used by the enemy. **Base Skill:** 30% +5% per level of experience.

**Detect Concealment.** This is a skill which enables the individual to spot and recognize camouflage, hunting blinds, trip wires, concealed structures/buildings and vehicles, secret doors and compartments, as well as the ability to construct unobtrusive shelters, use camouflage and blend into the environment. **Base Skill:** 25% +5% per level of experience. **Bonuses:** +5% to the Camouflage skill.

**Disguise.** The character knows how to apply make-up, wigs, skin putty, dyes, and other special effects in order to alter his appearance or that of somebody else. **Base Skill:** 25% +5% per level of experience. Also see the Undercover Ops and Impersonation skills.

**Escape Artist.** The methods, principles, and tricks of escape artists. The character can try slipping out of handcuffs, ropes, straightjacket, etc., using techniques that include hand positioning, tensing and relaxing muscles, keeping hand and wrist joints flexible, popping joints in and out, the study of knots, and one or more hidden lock picking tools concealed on his body. **Note:**

Picking locks is a separate and distinct skill. **Base Skill:** 30% +5% per level of experience. **Bonus:** +5% to the Lock Picking skill.

**Forgery.** The techniques of making false copies of official documents, signatures, passports, I.D.s, and other printed material. The forger must have an original or photocopy to work from in order to make an accurate copy. Skilled forgers can recognize other counterfeits, but with a skill penalty of -10%. **Base Skill:** 20% +5% per level of experience; +10% if the Art skill is also known to the forger.

**Impersonation.** This skill enables a character to impersonate another person or general type of person (soldier, worker, etc.). This means he must have a rudimentary (if not comprehensive) knowledge of the person or general type of personnel that he plans to impersonate. This includes a knowledge of that person or type of person or job, work procedure or protocol, local laws and customs, individual habits, dress/uniform/lifestyle, hierarchy of command/leadership, rank, and speaking the proper language(s). **Base Skill:** 30% to impersonate a general type of personnel and 16% to impersonate a specific individual (which may require weeks of study and special disguise), +4% per level of experience. **Bonus:** +10% to the Undercover Ops skill.

The success of one's Impersonation/disguise can only be determined after exposing oneself to those whom you wish to trick.

A successful impersonation requires the player to roll under his character's Impersonation skill for each of his first *THREE* encounters. Afterward, the character must roll under his skill for each encounter with an officer, high ranking official or close friend or relative. If interrogated/questioned, he must successfully roll after every three questions or be revealed as an impostor. A failed roll means his Impersonation has failed and he may be in immediate danger.

**Intelligence.** This is the specific training in the practices and principles of recognizing and analyzing sources of information about the enemy, observation techniques, counter-intelligence measures and proper procedure. This includes the practical assessment of sights and sounds, estimation of distance from strategic positions, what to report, handling prisoners of war, and handling captured documents and equipment (tagging and reporting to group leaders or proper authorities). This means the character will be able to accurately estimate ranges, the number of enemies, direction, purpose, and assess the importance of specific information.

Further Intelligence training includes a working knowledge of indigenous guerilla warfare, enemy practices, appearance, and current activities. This enables the intelligence officer to recognize suspicious activity as guerilla actions and identify guerilla operatives. **For Example:** In a combat situation, a particular booby trap, or weapon or mode of operation may be indicative of guerilla activity in the area. It may be up to the character to confirm the existence of the enemy and their strengths, number, and location. Another area of training made available to Intelligence is the identification of enemy troops, officers, and foreign advisors. This means the person learns the many distinguishing ranks and marks that identify specific military units, special forces, groups, and leaders of the enemy. Such identification can pinpoint and confirm enemy operations, goals, and movement, as well as confirm outside interven-

tion/aid. Law enforcement uses the same fundamentals when dealing with gangs, terrorists, and known criminals and criminal organizations.

**Note:** A failed roll in any of the areas of Intelligence means that evidence is inconclusive, or that the character has incorrectly assessed the information/situation and is uncertain. A failed roll involving individual clues may mean the person has dismissed them entirely as being meaningless (G.M.s, use your discretion). **Base Skill:** 32% +4% per level of experience.

**Interrogation.** This skill includes training in the questioning of prisoners, captives and informers, and the assessment of that information. The character knows the techniques to get information from (typically unwilling) subjects. This includes such old methods as "good cop, bad cop" (one interrogator is threatening and intimidating, the other is sympathetic and friendly), deceiving and misleading the subject into giving away information, and similar methods. The character also can judge if the subject is lying (the Game Master might assess bonuses and penalties depending on how good a liar the subject is, and/or on the victim's M.E., M.A. and P.B.; the higher any or each of these, the more convincing the lies). This skill also includes some basic knowledge on methods of torture, from basic tactics like depriving the subject of sleep, to the old "medieval" instruments, and drugs. **Note:** Only evil characters will routinely or callously engage in torture. This skill does *NOT* work on the walking dead, who are impervious to pain, fatigue and drugs. **Base Skill:** 30% +5% per level of experience; -20% on supernatural creatures.

**Pick Locks.** The character knows the methods and tools for picking/opening key and basic tumbler type locks. This does not include sophisticated computer or electronic locks. It takes 1D6 melee rounds for each attempt to pick a lock. A failed roll means the lock holds; try again. **Base Skill:** 30% +5% per level of experience.

**Pick Pockets.** An ability to remove items from a person without their being aware of it. If a Pick Pockets attempt fails, the item has NOT been removed and there is a 67% likelihood of the intended victim recognizing the intent of the action. **Base Skill:** 25% +5% per level of experience.

**Sniper.** This skill represents special training in long-range shooting and marksmanship. Only weapons that can be made to fire a single bullet/round (or blast) can be used for sniping; no automatic firing. Acceptable weapons include bow and arrows, crossbows, bolt-action rifles, and other rifles capable of switching from automatic to single shot. **Bonus:** +2 to strike on a *Called* or *Aimed Shot* only.

**Tracking (humans).** Visual tracking is the identification of tracks, and following the path of men and animals (and the unknown) by the signs they leave on the ground and vegetation. Tracking is a precise art, requiring much practice. The skill includes the evaluation of tracks, indicating whether the subject being tracked is loaded down with equipment, running, moving slowly (by measuring the space between steps), and so on. By this means, the tracker can estimate the subject's rate of movement, apparent direction, the number of people in the party, and whether the person appears to know he is being followed. Other methods of tracking require recognizing telltale signs such as blood and other stains, broken and displaced vegetation, overturned rocks, litter (such as cigarette butts, ration cans,



candy wrappers, soiled bandages and campfire remains), and even odors carried by the wind.

Tracking includes recognizing dangerous animals by their tracks, habits and feces. Likewise, tire tracks of vehicles can reveal the size and type of vehicle, the weight of its load, and sometimes even its make and year.

Counter-tracking techniques are also known, and include covering one's trail, misdirection, parallel trails, avoiding obvious pitfalls like littering and others.

*A failed roll means* that the signs are inconclusive, vague or misleading. Additional signs must be found to verify or clarify (roll again). Three consecutive failed rolls means the tracker has completely lost the trail. Roll once every 40 yards/meters when following a trail, unless it is very obvious, like a caravan of wagons or company of soldiers (60 or more troops). Characters attempting to follow a skilled tracker who is deliberately trying to conceal his trail suffer a penalty of -25% to stay on him. However, the character engaged in counter-tracking techniques travels at slow speeds, about half that of a casual rate of speed (or 1/4 his maximum speed).

**Base Skill:** 25% +5% per level of experience for both the tracking and counter-tracking abilities. A character trained in tracking people may also track zombies, but tracking *Crawlers* is more difficult and the character does so at half his normal skill ability.

**Undercover Ops.** Training in undercover operations in which the character learns the methods and techniques of blending smoothly into the background and appearing as if he belongs there (just another unmemorable face in the crowd or one of the guys), as well as assuming a false identity and playing a "role" to track, spy upon or gather information or evidence. **Note:** This skill is typically reserved for law enforcement, espionage agents, con artists and other criminal types. **Base Skill:** 30% +5% per level of experience.

**Wilderness Survival.** Techniques for getting water, food, shelter, and help when stranded in wilderness regions: forests, deserts, mountains, etc. Characters without this skill will not be able to stay healthy for more than a few days in the wilderness after their supplies run out. **Base Skill:** 30% +5% per level of experience.

## Horsemanship Skills

The Horsemanship skill includes the basic principles of riding, the care and feeding of the animal, recognizing breed and quality, charging, and jumps. There are three main types of horseback riding skills. Each indicates a certain degree of training and expertise.

**General/Standard** (the typical skill known by most civilized people), **Cowboy** (highly skilled equestrian ability) and **Exotic Animals** (the ability to ride unusual mounts like camels or elephants). Unless stated otherwise, a character can only select *Horsemanship: General*. Cowboy is generally restricted to elite equestrian riders such as genuine cowboys, ranchers, those who compete in equestrian riding competitions and so on. *Exotic Animals* is typically restricted to circus entertainers who might ride an elephant, llamas, camel, or even a tiger rather than a horse.

Each *Horsemanship skill* indicates a certain degree of training and expertise in riding and handling horses. Each type of Horsemanship has the following skills and areas of knowledge. The higher the skill percentage, the better the skill or ability. **Note:** Tricks and stunts are performed at half the rider's normal riding skill. To avoid being thrown from the horse when jumping, charging, kicking or performing some other difficult maneuver or trick, the character must roll under his second percentage to remain in the saddle and in control of his animal. Also note that the *American Cowboy* is, arguably, the most skilled and versatile horseman in the world with skills such as roping and herding as part of his repertoire of horsemanship related skills; all elements that are not usually available to other horsemen in the world.

**Riding & Care of Horses:** The first percentile number indicates the character's riding ability and a fundamental knowledge of the feeding, care, and grooming of horses.

**Recognize Quality/Breed:** The first percentile number also indicates the success ratio of recognizing the breed quality, age, strength, speed, health, and general attributes/capabilities (race horse, workhorse, warhorse, etc.) of the animal.

**Breed Horses:** The second percentile number indicates the knowledge in the raising, breaking, training and breeding of horses. It includes shoeing horses, giving birth, and curing minor ailments and injuries.

**Jumping:** The second percentile number also indicates the success ratio of NOT being thrown from the horse when jumping, charging, kicking or performing some other difficult maneuver or trick. The character must roll under his percentage to remain in the saddle and in control of his animal. Damage from being thrown off a horse is typically 1D6.

**Racing:** The second percentile number also indicates the success ratio of maintaining control and getting maximum speed while racing at full gallop. A failed roll means the horse runs quickly but 10% short of its maximum speed, but the rider can coax that little extra spirit and speed out of the animal. Once every four minutes, the rider can get the horse to kick into overdrive and run at 25% faster than its normal maximum. However, this speed can only be maintained for one minute at a time and cannot be done more than three times in a 15 minute period. Maximum running speed can be maintained for a period of minutes equal to the horse's P.E. attribute. Pushing the horse beyond its endurance will cause it to slow down by 30% and after 4D4 minutes, collapse from exhaustion (requires at least a half hour rest and light activity for another hour).

**Combat:** All bonuses are in addition to other combat skills, Weapon Proficiencies, or attribute bonuses. Applies to the rider, not the horse. The rider gains a combat advantage from the height and speed of being mounted. This provides the following bonuses when charging on horseback, regardless of what Horsemanship skill the character has chosen: +1 to parry and dodge, +4 damage. Note that a person can not shoot a projectile weapon of any kind (bow and arrow or gun) with any degree of accuracy. An Aimed Shot is impossible on a moving animal! Bursts are possible if the horse is moving quickly, but not at a full gallop. At full gallop, the shooter can fire only as wild.

**A General Note about Horses:** The horse attack skill reference indicates that the rider is skilled enough to remain saddled

while he attacks and has his horse rearing or kicking in simultaneous attack (roll under second percentile number).

Attribute Notes: Horses have a fairly high animal intelligence, roughly equal to that of a dog, and can generally carry or pull 500 pounds (225 kg). A war or work horse can carry about 600 pounds (270 kg) but pull up to five tons, and a pair of work-horses can pull up to 15 tons (but speed of working is a mere 15 mph/24 km).

Speed: Workhorses, Mules & Donkeys: Spd 22 or 15 mph (24 km). Ponies: Spd 36 +3D4 or approx. 25-30 mph (40-48 km). Riding Horse: Spd 48+1D6 or approx. 35 mph (56 km). Draft or Warhorse: Spd 48+1D4 or approx. 35 mph (56 km). Race Horse: Spd 57+1D6 or approximately 40 mph (64 km) with a short burst (1D4 minutes long) of up to 50 mph (80 km), but cannot handle the hardships of the wilderness (reduce H.P. & S.D.C. by 20% for every month forced to function in the wilderness or as a workhorse).

Average P.P.E.: 5D6; sensitive to the supernatural, the presence of zombies, ley lines and strong magic.

Average Life Span: 7-9 years as a work or strong riding animal, after which the horse is worn out (reduce H.P., S.D.C. and Speed by one third), but can continue to be used for light work, light to medium riding and/or put out to stud for several years to follow; total average life span is 12-15 years.

Hit Points & S.D.C.: The typical riding and race horse has 4D6+6 Hit Points and 5D6+12 S.D.C. Warhorse: 5D6+10 H.P. and 6D6+16 S.D.C. Workhorses and Mules: 4D6+10 H.P. and 4D6+20 S.D.C. Pony and Donkey: 4D6 H.P. and 2D6+12 S.D.C.

Damage from Horse Attacks: The exact damage from a horse's kick will vary with the size and breed of the animal; generally 2D6 S.D.C. from the front legs and 4D6 from the rear legs; +6 damage from warhorses.

Attacks per Melee Round: 2 or 3.

Cost: Donkey: \$600-\$1,200. Mule: \$800-\$2,000. Workhorse: \$1,000-\$4,200. Ponies: \$800-\$4,000. Riding Horse: \$2000-\$6000. Draft or Warhorse: \$3000-\$6,000 untrained; \$15,000-\$30,000 for a trained animal. Race Horse (for sport & gambling): \$20,000-\$500,000.

**Horsemanship: General.** All the basic skills as noted above. **Base Skill:** 40%/20% +4% per level of experience. The first percentile number indicates riding ability and general knowledge, care, and feeding. The second percentile number applies to trick riding/stunts and breeding.

Combat: All bonuses are in addition to other combat skills, Weapon Proficiencies, or attribute bonuses. Applies to the rider, not the horse. The rider gains a combat advantage from the height and speed of being mounted.

+1 to parry or dodge while on horseback.

Inflicts +1D4 S.D.C. damage when on horseback.

Charge attack (running horse) with a pole-arm or spear: +1D6 damage. The attacker must roll under the second percentile number to avoid being dismounted. Charge attacks count as two melee actions/attacks.

Horse attack: This indicates that the rider is skilled enough to remain saddled while he attacks and has his horse rearing or kicking in simultaneous attack (roll under second percentile

number). Damage from the kick of a horse will vary with the size and breed of the animal; generally 2D6 from the front legs and 4D6 from the rear legs.

**Horsemanship: Cowboy.** Unless stated otherwise, selection of this skill as an Elective Skill counts as two skill selections. **Base Skill:** 66%/50% +3% per level of experience. The first percentile number indicates riding ability and general knowledge, care, and feeding. The second percentile number applies to trick riding/stunts and breeding.

Combat: All bonuses are in addition to other combat skills, weapon proficiencies, or attribute bonuses. Applies to the rider, not the horse. The rider gains a combat advantage from the height and speed of being mounted.

+1 on initiative when on horseback at levels 2, 5, 10 & 15.

+2 to roll with fall or impact when knocked from a horse.

+2 to parry, dodge and rope/ensnare/entangle while on horseback.

Inflicts an extra +1D4 S.D.C. when on horseback, depending on the weapon; not applicable to ranged weapons like guns.

Charge attack (running horse) with a pole-arm or spear: +2D6 S.D.C. damage. The attacker must roll under the second percentile number to avoid being dismounted. Charge attacks count as two melee actions/attacks.

Horse attack; see details under stats for horses.

Special Related Skill: Herding: The techniques and methods of leading, directing and controlling cattle in a contained and orderly herd. Also includes keeping animals calm, basic care and feeding, how to tend cattle, recognize disease and illness, give birth to young, survive and regain control of a stampede, gather strays, pen and corral livestock, mend fences, etc. **Base Skill:** 30% +5% per level of experience.

Special Related Skill: Roping: Knowledge and training in how to use a lariat, lasso, tie knots, expertly handle roped animals after they are snared, bring them to a stop by taking quick turns of the lariat around the saddle horn (known as "dally" or "da la vuelta"), tethering animals, and how to "hog-tie" animals (after the animal has been lassoed, the horse backs up to make the rope taut while the cowboy "tips" over the animal and ties three legs with a half shank; used in separating stubborn animals from the herd, capturing wild animals, and branding). The rope/lariat can be used for the roping and tying of animals, including cattle, horses, and other livestock, and human beings, zombies too. This skill with a lariat can be executed standing on the ground, but is designed and intended to be done from horseback.

A failed roll to tie a knot means that it is loose, sloppy and easy to untie, slip out of, or likely to unravel or snap when strained. A failed roll to lasso an animal or stationary target means it misses its mark or slips off.

*Against human and intelligent opponents,* roll to lasso as if it were a combat attack to strike and ensnare. The intended victim can try to dodge; parry is not applicable. A successful strike means the character is caught in the lasso. *Ensnaring* a foot, leg or hand means the victim can be tripped, knocked down and pulled/dragged by hand or horse. Ensnaring the upper body means one arm is pinned (useless). Two or more lassoes around the upper body means both arms are pinned and attacks requiring the use of one's hands are impossible, and the lassoed indi-

vidual can be pulled off his feet and dragged. Multiple lassoes can also be used to snare each limb and “spread-eagle” the character. It takes 1D4 melee actions to cut through a lasso, but it is impossible to draw a weapon and cut oneself loose if both arms are pinned or while being dragged. In this combat usage, the roping character is +1 to strike and entangle for every 20 points of skill, so a skill of 65% means +3 to strike/ensnare/entangle.

**Base Skill:** 20% +5% per level of experience.

**Horsemanship: Exotic Animals.** Basically the same as the General Horsemanship skill, except that the character is experienced in riding “tame” animals other than the horse. This can include elephants, camels, llamas, and other unusual riding animals. Wild, untamed creatures cannot be ridden. **Base Skill:** 30%/20% +4% per level of experience. **Note:** Characters with the traditional “Horsemanship” skill can learn to ride alien or demonic horses and other horse-like beasts, but at a skill penalty of -12% to ride ground/running animals and -20% to ride flying or tree climbing or leaping exotic animals. Similarly, beings from other dimensions not familiar with riding the fast and sleek Earth horse are -10% to ride them.

## Mechanical Skills

**Aircraft Mechanics.** The understanding of aerodynamics and the training to repair, rebuild, modify and redesign conventional aircraft, including single engine and twin engine airplanes, jets, helicopters and hovercraft. Body work and experimental, military vehicles are *not* included. **Base Skill:** 50% +4% per level of experience.

**Automotive Mechanics.** The ability to repair, rebuild, modify, and redesign conventional vehicles with internal combustion (gas) engines. It also includes body work, turbine engines, methanol, ethanol and diesel truck engines. **Base Skill:** 60% +3% per level of experience.

**Basic Mechanics.** A general familiarity and understanding of basic mechanics. This character can fix a toaster, repair a bicycle, replace a belt on a motor, repair or replace a switch, handle or knob, replace a spark plug, change oil, assist in automobile repairs, maintain machinery, read a schematic and similar fundamental tasks. **Base Skill:** 40% +5% per level of experience.

**Locksmith.** The study of lock designs and the ability to repair, build, modify and open locks. The methods, techniques, and tools of lock picking include the old-style key and tumbler, combination, and modern electrical locking systems. **Time Requirements:** 1D4 melees to open an antiquated key type lock or simple tumbler/combination type, 1D4 minutes to open an elaborate tumbler type, 2D4 minutes to open a simple electronic lock (usually by patching in a bypass system) and 1D4 hours to break a complex, state-of-the-art electronic lock system such as those used in high security and restricted areas. Super high-tech systems, such as those used by the military and government, will require 3D4 hours and have a skill penalty of -20%.

If an unsuccessful skill roll is made, the lock is not opened and the process must be repeated. If an attempt to open an electronic lock fails, roll again. A second failed roll means that the lock is irreparably damaged and can not be opened! **Base Skill:** 35% +5% per level of experience. **Requires:** At least the *Basic*

*Electronics* skill (-5% penalty when working on complex or high-tech locks) or *Electrical Engineer* (+5% bonus).

**Mechanical Engineer.** Training, understanding, and knowledge of how machinery is designed, operated, built, and maintained. Characters can attempt to redesign, modify, repair, construct, or sabotage mechanical devices (includes nuclear reactor driven turbines and atomic engines). The player must first roll to see if his character can figure out how to operate, analyze and design a machine. When a successful diagnostic roll has been made, roll again to determine when the character can fix/change/build the mechanism. **Base Skill:** 30% +5% per level of experience. **Requires:** *Basic or Advanced Mathematics, Basic Electronics,* and *Literacy.* **Special Bonus:** Add a one time bonus of +5% to the *Locksmith* and *Surveillance skills* if Mechanical Engineer is also known. There is a -30% penalty when working on alien or extremely unfamiliar mechanics. The mechanic *may* be able to puzzle out some of the basic aspects of an alien or magical device, and *may* be able to figure out how to operate the machine, but will not be able to completely fathom how it works or how to repair it.

**Munitions Expert.** This is a somewhat simplistic and basic version of the Weapons Engineer as it applies to weapons. The character can maintain, fix, modify, mount, reload ammunition, unjam, repair and figure out most small arms – all types of pistols and rifles – as well as make special ammunition (silver coated, dummys, etc.) and even repair minor damage to body armor (20 S.D.C. maximum). Things like adjusting targeting sights, the use, mounting and repair of weapon sights and optical enhancements, reloading missiles and ammo drums, and installing/mounting a machine-gun on a vehicle are all second nature to those with this skill. Can also make arrows and arrowheads, sharpen blades/weapons, make horseshoes and basic metal items (nails, spikes, and chain links), and deactivate, reset and fix *simple traps* (roll for each attempt with a -10% penalty). **Base Skill:** 40% +5% per level of experience. **Note:** Automatically gets the *Basic Mechanics* skill at 30% +5% per level as part of this package.

**Robot Mechanics.** This is the specific study of advanced mechanics as it applies to robotics. Those skilled in this discipline can repair, modify, build, and sabotage robots, including industrial robot machines, experimental cutting edge robots, and military drones and robots. There is a -30% penalty when working with advanced experimental and military robots as well as alien robots. **Base Skill:** 30% +5% per level of experience. **Requires:** *Mechanical Engineer* skill and related requirements.

**Vehicle Armorer.** A specialized skill in which the character can do more than just tinker with the mechanics of a vehicle. He can add (and often conceal) vehicle armor, modify or completely reconfigure the body/housing of a vehicle, add weapon mounts and turrets, add ram prows and shielding, soup-up with heavy-duty shock absorbers, extend and shorten wheelbases, as well as operate, repair and modify weapons for mounting and use on vehicles; typically large caliber weapons, such as vehicle-mounted flame throwers, machine-guns and mortars, etc. Various other skills may relate to this skill. **Note:** Before the dead rose, all of the above was *illegal* outside the military and appealed to mercenaries, bounty hunters and criminals operating outside the law or in third world countries. Now such a skill helps human survivors live in a deadly environment. **Basic**

**Skill:** 30% +5% per level of experience. **Note:** Automatically gets the *Basic Mechanics* skill at +20% as part of this package. Taking this skill in conjunction with *Automotive Mechanics* provides a +10% bonus to the automotive skill. This skill is usually reserved for Military Engineers and Military Contractors.

**Weapons Engineer.** The complete understanding of military class weapon systems, cannons, recoilless rifles, launch systems, missiles and rockets, and their incorporation into military vehicles. The character can maintain, repair, modify, mount, and figure out most weapon systems, and power supplies. He can repair an assault rifle, handle heavy weapons and install a missile system into a vehicle or a suitcase launcher. The engineer can also add and repair armor and is an expert welder. **Base Skill:** 30% +5% per level of experience. **Requires:** *Mechanical Engineering*. **Bonus:** +1 to strike when using heavy weapons or vehicular weapon systems. **Note:** -30% when working on alien or experimental weapon systems or vehicles. This skill is usually reserved for Military Engineers and Military Contractors.

## Medical Skills

**Animal Husbandry.** Knowledge in the behavior, care, feeding, breeding, reproduction habits and health of domesticated animals such as cattle, sheep, goats, horses, ducks, chickens, dogs, cats, and similar livestock and pets. The percentile number indicates the degree of knowledge and skill one has about animals and their care. Reduce the skill ability by half when caring for captive or injured wild animals. **Base Skill:** 40% +5% per level of experience. Also see Veterinary Science.

**Brewing: Medicinal.** This is the making of fermented alcoholic beverages from grains or fruits. This specifically includes wine, mead, ale, beer and moonshine, as well as teas, elixirs, tonics, vapors (breathed in rather than drunken) and other “brews” for medicinal purposes. Stronger types of alcohol, such as brandy, rum, and whiskey, are not included, nor are champagnes or fine wines. The first percentile number indicates the chance of success (a failed roll means an undrinkable concoction). The second indicates the quality of the brew; the higher the number, the tastier the drink. **Base Skill:** 25%/30% +5% per level of experience. Adds a +5% bonus to the Holistic Medicine skill.

**Crime Scene Investigation.** The procedures, methods, and techniques in police crime scene investigation, including protecting the integrity of a crime scene, gathering and preserving evidence, fingerprinting, recognizing and preserving DNA evidence, ballistics (matching bullets to weapons and angles of impact), and finding, processing and analyzing clues and evidence. **Base Skill:** 35% +5% per level of experience. **Bonus:** +1 to Perception Rolls. **Requires:** *Biology, Chemistry, Chemistry: Analytical, Advanced Mathematics, and Literacy*.

**First Aid.** Rudimentary medical treatment which includes how to bandage wounds, stop bleeding, splint broken limbs, administer artificial respiration (CPR), as well as use antiseptics and common anti-inflammatory drugs and painkillers. **Base Skill:** 45% +5% per level of experience.

**Forensics.** Forensic medicine, the proper medical procedure of performing an autopsy on a corpse, finding evidence regarding the time of death, cause of death, age and sex of the victim,

identifying physical trauma, internal injury, the presence of toxins, and other details related to the condition of the body and cause of death. **Requires:** *Biology* and *Chemistry* skills. **Base Skill:** 35% +5% per level of experience.

**Holistic Medicine.** Training in the recognition, preparation, and application of natural medicines usually made from whole plants and/or their parts (roots, leaves, fruit). The Holistic Doctor is basically a pharmacist and naturalist who creates drugs from herbs and vegetation, as well as studies and treats common ailments. He can find and use plants to create salves, balms, ointments, and lotions to soothe burns, boils, rashes, and insect bites, and reduce swelling, as well as create local anesthetics, and salves to heal wounds faster (twice as quick as normal). Potions and tonics are created to settle upset stomachs, induce drowsiness, or hallucinations. The individual can also make alcohol and poison (hemlock and mandrake for example).

The student of herbology also has a good knowledge of plant lore and when and where to find healing plants, edible fruit, roots, and bark, as well as how to use and/or avoid dangerous flora. The character can also preserve foods and knows how to set bones, bandage cuts, and suture cuts. **Note:** Plants are seasonal and the right root or leaf may not be readily available in certain times of the year/season, or may be found exclusively in remote regions. Game Masters should use a certain amount of common sense and drama with this skill. **Base Skill:** 30%/20% +5% per level of experience. The first percentage number is the character’s ability to accurately diagnose the problem. The second percentage number is the healer’s skill at successfully treating the problem with herbs and making healing teas, tonics and salves. A failed roll means the treatment or concoction did not work. **Modifiers:** -10% to treat disease, infection, and poison, -20% to treat internal injuries, -15% to cauterize, -30% to treat alien creatures; cannot perform surgery or amputation. **Bonus:** This skill provides a bonus of +10% to the Brewing and Preserve Food skills.

**Medical Doctor.** The Medical Doctor is a trained surgeon and has a doctorate in the medical sciences. Areas of training include: clinical skills, medical discipline, code of ethics, physiology (muscle, respiratory, blood, body fluids), pathology (diseases, their structure and function), rudimentary pharmacology (use, reaction, and interaction of drugs), laboratory skills, and techniques and methods of data collection. Surgery includes the precision use of knives and scalpels for medical purposes, sewing cuts closed, removing warts and growths, delivering babies (by C-section if necessary), realigning and setting broken bones, amputating limbs, cauterizing wounds, surgically removing foreign objects (i.e. bullets, shrapnel, etc.), stopping bleeding, surgically stopping internal bleeding, repairing internal injuries, and the general treatment of wounds and disease. **Base Skill:** 60%/50% +5% per level of experience. The first percentage number is the doctor’s ability to accurately diagnose the problem. The second percentage number is the doctor’s skill at successfully treating the problem. **Requires:** *Biology, Pathology, Chemistry, Basic or Advanced Mathematics and Literacy*.

**Paramedic.** An advanced form of emergency medical treatment which includes all first-aid techniques, the setting of broken bones, suturing of wounds, use of oxygen and emergency medical equipment, administering of drugs, knowledge of how

to move a critically injured person, and other life-saving techniques.

*A failed roll* means the patient has not responded to treatment or that the treatment has been improperly administered. **Note:** For serious injury or coma, roll three times, consecutively, on percentile dice. A roll of two successful out of three means the wound has been properly treated or that the patient's condition has been *stabilized*. Failure means the patient's condition is unchanged and getting worse. Another character can immediately attempt to apply medical aid or the same player can try again, but the first character must spend 1D6 minutes of reexamination and/or concentration on the problem before he can try again. **Base Skill:** 40% +5% per level of experience.

**Pathology.** This branch of medicine deals with the nature of diseases, their causes, and symptoms, and the functional and structural changes caused by disease. Training includes anatomy, physiology, cell biology, manifestation of disease, tissue injury and repair, abnormal cell structure, metabolism, diagnosis of human diseases, tissue culture methods and applications, analysis of drugs in biological samples and laboratory research, investigative methods, and use of instruments and equipment. **Base Skill:** 40% +5% per level of experience. **Bonus:** +5% to Forensics skill. **Requires:** *Biology, Chemistry, and Literacy* skills.

**Psychology.** The principles, theories and evaluation of human behavior as they apply to psychology and psycho-therapy. Includes analysis, understanding and treatment of emotional and mental illness, motivational and perceptual disorders, personality assessment, alcoholism, drug abuse and treatment, and other aspects and studies of the mind and human behavior. **Base Skill:** 35% +5% per level of experience. **Requires:** *Biology, Chemistry, and Literacy*.

**Toxicology.** This is a specialty in medicine that deals with poisons, venoms and toxins, their manufacture, composition and antidotes. This skill is useful for both doctors and assassins. A successful skill roll will help determine if poisons have been used on somebody and even the general type of poison/toxin used (a definite answer may require an autopsy and the Forensics skill). **Base Skill:** 40% +5% per level of experience. **Requires:** *Biology, Chemistry, and Literacy*.

**Veterinary Science.** A doctor who specializes in the medical care and treatment of wild and domestic animals. Areas of study are biology (specifically animal), reproduction, breeding, animal anatomy, physiology, pathology, toxicology, surgery, suturing wounds, setting bones, disease, medical care and other applications and techniques in the medical treatment of animals. **Base Skill:** 50% +4% per level of experience. **Requires:** *Biology* and *Animal Husbandry*. **Note:** A Medical Doctor can also treat an animal, but is at a -35% penalty to do so.

## Military Skills

**Aircraft: Combat Helicopters.** The specialized skill required to fly all types of helicopters, including combat 'choppers, and their related weapon systems. **Base Skill:** 52% +3% per level of experience.

**Aircraft: Jet Fighters.** Training includes flying, maneuvering, aerial combat strategies, and typical fighter jet weapon systems. **Base Skill:** 50% +3% per level of experience.

**APCs & Tanks.** Military vehicles often have unconventional controls and handle differently than conventional vehicles, especially the many ton, armored combat vehicles such as tanks and armored personnel carriers (APC). Thus, special training is required to pilot them. **Base Skill:** 50% +3% per level of experience. **Note:** Those with this skill can also pilot other types of "tracked vehicles."

**Armorer/Field Armorer.** This is a somewhat simplistic and basic version of the Weapons Engineer as it applies to infantry weapons. A competent Armorer character can maintain, fix, modify, mount, reload ammunition, and figure out most small arms. The Armorer can repair all types of pistols and rifles, repair minor damage to body armor (20 S.D.C. maximum), adjust targeting sights, use and repair optical enhancements, reload missiles and ammo drums, install/mount machine-guns and rocket launchers on a vehicle, as well sharpen blades, make arrows and arrowheads, make horseshoes and basic metal items (nails, spikes, and chain links). **Base Skill:** 40% +5% per level of experience. **Note:** Automatically gets the *Basic Mechanics* skill at 30% +5% per level as part of this package.

**Camouflage.** The skill of concealing a fixed base position, vehicle, equipment or individual, using natural and/or artificial materials. A fair amount of time is involved in the preparation of a larger position. Large cargo nets, cut branches or underbrush are used most often in camouflage. This skill is also used to conceal traps. **Base Skill:** 20% +5% per level of experience.

**Demolitions.** Demolitions provides the character with an advanced knowledge in the use and workings of explosives and detonation devices for the purpose of blowing up bridges, buildings, barriers, fortifications and sabotage. This includes all types of explosives, such as mines, dynamite, plastics, nitro, blasting caps, etc. It also includes a basic understanding of the strategic placement of mines and booby traps. This skill increases the character's awareness of suspicious rope, string, and wire. **Base Skill:** 60% +3% per level of experience. A failed roll means a dud; no explosion.

**Demolitions Disposal.** The skill to safely defuse unexploded mines, bombs, explosive booby traps, dud artillery rounds, dud explosive charges, or any other type of explosive device. **Base Skill:** 60% +3% per level of experience.

**Demolitions: Underwater.** Fundamentally the same basic skills and training as Demolitions, but with an emphasis on using explosives in an underwater environment, including underwater techniques, area effect, sound wave damage, different types of explosives, as well as arming, disarming and repairing torpedoes and depth charges. **Base Skill:** 56% +4% per level of experience. **Note:** Any character with the Demolitions skill can use explosives underwater, but is -10%.

**Find Contraband.** See the description under *Rogue Skills*.

**Forced March.** Practiced training in uniform marching with a full field pack and weapons. See the description under *Physical Skills*.

**Military Etiquette.** A clear understanding of the way the military works, including rules of behavior (when to salute, how to address superiors/subalterns, etc.), military procedures and

routines, standard issue of equipment, special ordering procedures, proper display of rank and medals, advancement in rank (and the duties that come with it), proper troop formations, how to deal with military bureaucracy, the chain of command, proper channels, who to contact to get things done, and other useful information in matters of military protocol and bureaucracy. **Base Skill:** 35% +5% per level of experience. **Note:** All soldiers have a fundamental knowledge of military etiquette (base skill 30% with no improvement), but this skill is much more complete with a strong knowledge of what is expected, correct and the formal approach (i.e. by the book knowledge).



**NBC Warfare (Nuclear, Biological, & Chemical).** This is the knowledge of safety precautions to protect oneself and others from the effects of nuclear, biological or chemical warfare, waste and contamination. The character is also knowledgeable in the safe handling and “clean-up” and containment of such hazardous materials. **Base Skill:** 35% +5% per level of experience.

**Recognize Weapon Quality.** The ability to accurately determine a weapon’s durability, reliability, and quality by physically examining it. This includes knowing which manufacturers are reputed to make the best weapons, the ability to recognize damage or signs of misuse, modifications/customization or wear and tear, whether the weapon can be made as good as new with a little repair work and/or cleaning, whether it is a cheap (or quality) “knock-off” (copy/imitation), and so on. The character can also recognize if the weapon is stolen (serial numbers filed away, etc.), new, old, and if it has any other special features or properties as well as what the fair price should be. **Base Skill:** 25% +5% per level of experience. **Note:** Reduce the skill ability by half if the item is not actually handled (seen but not touched/examined).

**Trap & Mine Detection.** Knowledge of the strategic placement of booby traps and mines, the telltale trademarks and indications of traps and mines, how to avoid them, and the use of

mine and explosive detection equipment. The character has been trained to watch for suspicious objects, dirt mounds, trip wires and camouflaging materials that may denote the presence of a trap. Simple snare traps and trip wires can be easily disarmed by the character, but the Demolitions Disposal skill is required to *disarm* mines, explosives or complex traps. **Base Skill:** 20% +5% per level of experience on visuals alone. Add +50% when using special detection equipment to locate *mines/explosives* or +10% to locate other types of traps with detection equipment.

## Physical Skills

**Special Note:** One of the unique aspects of Palladium’s RPGs is that the player can build and increase his or her character’s physical attributes (P.S., P.P., P.E., Spd, and S.D.C.) by selecting Physical skills that build and develop muscles and endurance. ALL attribute and skill bonuses are accumulative. However, a specific Physical skill may only be chosen *once*, including Hand to Hand Combat skills.

There are five choices for Hand to Hand Combat skills available to the character (pick one), plus three additional *fighting techniques* which can be selected to improve one’s range of fighting ability: *Boxing*, *Kick Boxing* and *Wrestling* (can pick any or all).

**No Hand to Hand Combat Skill.** Characters without combat training get one hand to hand attack at levels 1, 3, and 9, and are +1 to dodge.

**Hand to Hand: Basic.** Provides elementary fighting techniques and methods of attack and self-defense as taught in military basic training or in self-defense classes. See the combat section for a listing of specific abilities.

**Hand to Hand: Expert.** An advanced form of self-defense and unarmed combat usually taught to commandos. It costs two of the character’s skill selections to learn. See the combat section for a listing of specific abilities.

**Hand to Hand: Martial Arts.** This is some form of Oriental fighting skill (karate, kung-fu, etc.) that teaches advanced hand to hand combat. It costs three of the character’s skill selections to learn. See the combat section for a listing of specific abilities.

**Hand to Hand: Assassin.** This is an advanced form of combat with an emphasis on immobilizing or killing one’s opponent quickly. It costs three of the character’s skill selections to learn. See the combat section for a listing of specific abilities.

**Hand to Hand: Commando.** This is an advanced form of military combat that includes martial arts techniques with an emphasis on immobilizing or killing one’s opponent quickly. It costs three of the character’s skill selections to learn. See the combat section for a listing of specific abilities.

**Acrobatics.** Aerial feats of agility and strength, such as walking a tightrope, high wire, trapeze, and stunts performed above ground. Other physical abilities include rolls, somersaults, leaps, and falls.

Provides all of the following:

An automatic kick attack at first level (1D8 S.D.C. damage).

Sense of balance (60% +5% per level).

Walk tightrope or high wire (60% +3% per level).

Climb rope (80% +2% per level).

Back Flip (60% +5% per level).

Basic Climb ability (40%; or adds a +15% to Climb skill).

Basic Prowl ability (30%; or adds a +5% to Prowl skill).

**Bonuses:** +2 bonus to roll with punch or fall, +1 to P.S., P.P., and P.E. attributes, and +1D6 to S.D.C.

**Aerobic Athletics.** A type of aerobic exercise to build the body, develop reflexes and grace, and learn a few very basic self-defense moves. **Bonuses:** +1 to disarm, +1 to pull punch, +2D4 S.D.C. and +2 to kicking damage. Sense of balance (30% +5% per level of experience).

**Athletics (general).** Training in, and enjoyment of, vigorous exertion for non-professional, competitive sports, exercises, and contests of strength, endurance, and agility. Includes sports and hobbies such as tennis, track and field, skateboarding, bicycling, golf, skiing, swimming, bowling, baseball, basketball, and similar activities. **Bonuses:** +1 to parry and dodge, +1 to roll with impact/punch/fall, +1 to P.S., +1D6 to Spd and +1D8 to S.D.C.

**Body Building & Weight Lifting.** The building of muscle tone and body strength through weight lifting and exercise. **Bonuses:** +2 to P.S. and +10 S.D.C.

**Boxing.** Classic art of fighting with fists. Training helps build the body and reflexes. Skilled boxers will automatically knockout opponents on a roll of a Natural Twenty. The victim of a knockout will remain unconscious for 1D6 melees. Unlike normal knockout/stun, the player does not have to announce that he is trying to knockout his opponent before making a roll to strike. **Bonuses:** +1 additional attack per melee, +2 to parry and dodge, +1 to roll with punch or fall, +2 to P.S. and +3D6 to S.D.C.

**Climb.** Knowledge of the tools and techniques for climbing up sheer surfaces. Players should roll once for every 20 feet (6 m) of a vertical climb. If the roll fails, it means he is losing his grip, however, every “skilled” climber gets a chance to regain his grip, roll again. Two consecutive failed rolls means the character falls (takes 1D6 damage per 10 feet/3m of a fall). **Base Skill:** 40% +5% per level of experience.

**Rappelling** is a specialized, rope climbing skill used in scaling walls, towers, and cliff facings. For game purposes, rappelling will include ascending and descending climbs. **Base Skill in Rappelling:** 30% +5% per level of experience.

**Fencing.** This is the formal art of fighting with a sword and dagger. This includes not only Olympic style fencing with a foil, epee or saber, but also Kendo (the use of a samurai katana) and other blades. **Bonuses:** +1 to strike and parry with a sword or dagger, and +1D6 to damage with a sword. **Requires:** W.P. Sword (W.P. Knife is optional).

**Forced March.** Practiced training in uniform marching with a full field pack and weapons. This is done at an even pace and rhythm that enables the marchers to cover great distances on foot at a faster than normal pace. Increase the normal Physical Endurance rate as to how long an activity like marching can be maintained by five times; applicable only to forced marches/traveling. Maximum speed on a forced march is roughly 60% of one’s speed attribute, which enables a large group of dozens to hundreds of soldiers to travel at the same consistent pace; suitable for everybody in the group (never less than a Speed of 8). Likewise, this skill trains soldiers to make

coordinated charges and maneuvers, including spear runs, spear and shield placement, and so on. **Bonuses:** +2 to P.E., +1D4 to Speed, +2D6 to S.D.C.

**Gymnastics.** Learning to do falls, rolls, tumbles, cartwheels, somersaults and to work the parallel bars and rings. This sport builds great upper body strength, grace, and balance.

Provides all of the following:

An automatic kick attack at first level (2D4 damage).

Sense of balance (50% +3% per level).

Work parallel bars & rings (60% +3% per level).

Back Flip (70% +2% per level).

Basic Prowl ability (30%; or adds a +5% to Prowl skill).

Basic Climb ability (25%; or adds a +5% to Climb skill).

Climb Rope/Rappel (60% +2% per level).

**Bonuses:** +2 bonus to roll with punch or fall, +2 to P.S., +1 to P.P., +2 to P.E. and +2D6 to S.D.C.

**Juggling.** The ability to toss “up” a number of objects, such as balls, clubs, knives, lit torches, and almost any small objects, and keep them continuously in the air with fast hand movements. It is used for the entertainment of others and to develop greater hand-eye coordination; +1 on initiative roll. **Base Skill:** 35% +5% per level of experience.

**Kick Boxing.** Kick Boxing is a form of martial arts self-defense. The character who takes Kick Boxing has done maybe a few months or a year of casual training as a supplement to his usual Hand to Hand Combat skill. **Bonuses:** +1 to P.E., +1 to P.S. and +1D10 to S.D.C. Plus, add the following strikes to the usual list of known attacks: Roundhouse Kick (3D6 damage), Axe Kick (2D8 damage), Knee Strike (1D8) and Leap Kick (3D8 damage, but counts as two melee attacks).

**Outdoorsmanship.** Being an avid outdoorsman and survivalist, this character has spent a significant portion of his/her life living off the land or in the wild. As a result, the character is hardened to the rigors of outdoor life. **Requires:** *Wilderness Survival*. **Bonuses:** Add +1 to P.E., +2D6 to S.D.C. and +5% to the *Dowsing, Fasting, I.D. Plants and Fruit, and Wilderness Survival* skills.

**Physical Labor.** Not all strength and conditioning comes from deliberate training or sports, some comes from old-fashioned hard work. This skill represents the strength and endurance gained from hard physical labor either due to a physical occupation (such as construction, ditch digging, warehouse work loading and unloading boxes, etc.) or really demanding chores at home such as chopping wood, bailing hay, mending fences, etc. **Bonuses:** Add +2 to P.S., +1 to P.E. and +2D8 to S.D.C.

**Prowl.** This skill helps the character to move with stealth; quietly, slowly, and carefully. Techniques include balance and footing, short steps and pacing, weapon positioning, prone positions for low visibility, and crawling. A failed Prowl roll means that the character has been seen or heard. If the Prowl roll is successful, then the character is not seen or heard and may make a sneak attack. **Base Skill:** 25% +5% per level of experience.

**Running.** A routine of running and exercise to build speed and endurance. For game purposes, the character is considered able to run one mile (1.6 km) for every one point of P.E. without undue fatigue and two miles (3.2 km) for every one point of P.E.



(minimum of 27 miles/43.2 km) before collapsing. **Bonuses:** +1 to P.E., +4D4 to Spd and +1D6 to S.D.C.

**Swim.** The rudimentary skill of keeping afloat, dives, swimming and lifesaving techniques. The percentile number indicates the overall quality of form as well as skill of execution. A character can swim a distance equal to 3x his P.S. in yards/meters per melee. This pace can be maintained for a total of minutes equal to his P.E. attribute number. **Base Skill:** 50% +5% per level of experience.

**Swim Fatigue Note:** The act of swimming on the surface of the water has the same fatigue rate as running and medium to heavy exertion, especially at great speed or very long periods of time.

**S.C.U.B.A.:** The letters S.C.U.B.A. stand for Self-Contained Underwater Breathing Apparatus. Individuals learn the methods and equipment needed for skin diving and underwater swimming. A character can swim a distance equal to 2x his P.S. in yards/meters per melee. This pace can be maintained for a total of minutes equal to his P.E./endurance. **Base Skill:** 50% +5% per level of experience. **Note:** The maximum safe depth one can go without getting the bends is about 120 feet (36.5 m). Deeper depths are possible with depressurization, special suits and submarines. Swimming is required for S.C.U.B.A.

**S.C.U.B.A. Fatigue Note:** Swimming underwater with S.C.U.B.A. equipment or other underwater equipment is considered to be light activity, unless extremely active, involved in combat or fast swimming (in which case it is considered strenuous or heavy activity). The buoyancy of water reduces the weight of most items by 30% when carried underwater. This means the fatigue rate for carrying a heavy load is reduced by 30%, meaning 30% more can be carried at the normal fatigue rate. Characters can also lift 30% heavier weights.

**Wrestling:** As taught in high schools and colleges, wrestling is more of a sport than a combat skill, but it does provide some useful combat moves.

**Bonuses:** +1 to roll with punch or fall, +2 to P.S., +1 to P.E. and +4D6 to S.D.C.

#### Wrestling Special Moves:

1. Body Block/Tackle does 1D4 damage. The opponent must dodge or parry (push away/deflect attacker) to avoid being knocked down. If knocked down, the opponent loses one melee attack/action and initiative for the rest of that round.

2. Pin/Incapacitate on a natural roll of 18, 19, or 20. This means that the wrestler can hold his opponent in such a way that his opponent cannot physically attack or move. However, the character who is using the "pin" hold cannot attack or move without releasing his opponent.

3. Crush/Squeeze does 1D4 S.D.C. damage per squeeze attack. Each "squeeze" counts as one melee action/attack.

## Rogue Skills

**Cardsharp (or Card Shark).** A skill that involves the manual dexterity of hand and finger manipulation to perform tricks, palming, and other gimmicks of sleight of hand with playing cards. This includes dealing from the bottom or middle of the deck, stacking a deck (to the card shark's favor), hiding cards up the sleeve (and elsewhere), fancy and impressive methods of shuffling and dealing the cards, as well as card counting and understanding the odds. A failed roll means the character has fumbled the trick or was too obvious and is caught cheating! **Base Skill:** 24% +4% per level of experience. Add +4% if the character also has the Palming skill and add +6% if he also has the Gambling (Dirty Tricks) skill.

**Computer Hacking.** This is a computer skill similar to Computer Programming (see Technical skills), however, the emphasis of this skill is breaking computer access codes to gain illegal access to other computer systems and steal or sabotage its data. The character is an expert in tracing computer data, bypassing defense systems, and breaking ("hacking") codes; add a one time bonus of +5% to the *Cryptography*, *Surveillance*, and *Locksmith* (electronic and computer controlled locks only) skills if the character is a hacker. **Base Skill:** 20% +5% per level of experience. **Requires:** *Literacy*, *Computer Operation*, *Computer Programming*, and at least *Basic Mathematics*.

**Concealment.** The practiced ability to hide small items on one's body or in hand, usually by continually moving it around from hand to hand or place to place, or hide it on one's person or an innocent bystander unnoticed. Objects must be no larger than 14 inches (35.5 cm) in height/length, and six inches (15.2 cm) in width. The weight must also be 10 pounds (4.5 kg) or less. The smaller and lighter the object, such as a knife, gem, key, etc., the easier it is to conceal (add a bonus of +5%). Larger items such as a book, scroll, club, statue, or similarly large or heavy object are more difficult to conceal on one's person for obvious reasons. **Base Skill:** 20% +4% per level of experience.

**Find Contraband.** The character with this skill knows where to find illegal arms dealers, the Black Market, smugglers, thieves, forgers, fences, pawnshops, blind pigs (illegal gambling establishments), exotic animal dealers, automobile chop-shops,



white slavers, prostitution rings, drug dealers, illegal medical treatment and supplies, stolen antiquities, and, in the post-apocalyptic world, hard to find items, as well as people who traffic in illegal goods and services. The skill makes the character familiar with underworld hangouts, gangs, criminal operations, and the general practices, codes of conduct, pricing structures and modes of operation of the criminal underworld. Likewise, the character has a good idea of what such goods should cost/trade for, and what these people pay for contraband items (typically only 20% of the retail market price). The character also knows the penalty for being caught with contraband. In the case of Scroungers, the character knows where to look for hard to find and valuable trade goods among the ruins of the abandoned cities. **Base Skill:** 26% +4% per level of experience. **Bonus:** +10% to I.D. Undercover Agents.

**Gambling (Standard).** This skill enables the character to skillfully play several different games of chance. The character knows the rules of 1D4 games, plus one additional game for every 2 points of the character's I.Q. (rounded up). In addition to rules, the character understands the theories of mathematical "odds" (+5% bonus to Basic Math skill), some basic strategies and tactics for winning consistently, when to hold them, fold them, etc. **Base Skill:** 30% +5% per level of experience.

**Gambling (Dirty Tricks).** This is the other side of gambling in which the character is skilled at cheating in games of chance. This includes knowledge of dirty tricks such as counting cards, how to use marked cards, using trick/loaded dice, stacking the deck (in one's favor), sleight of hand tricks to hide cards up sleeves or in the palm of the hand, dealing from the bottom of the deck, and other cheats (must have the Palming skill for the latter two). **Base Skill:** 20% +4% per level of experience.

**I.D. Undercover Agents.** A combination skill, good eye and knack for identifying undercover agents; typically members of law enforcement, but may also include government agents, private detectives, bounty hunters and investigators. **Base Skill:** 30% +4% per level of experience.

**Imitate Voices & Sounds.** The ability to imitate voices, accents and expressions of different vocal systems, dialects and languages. The first number indicates the character's ability to change his voice and imitate accents, inflections and expressions from other regions. A successful roll means he has disguised his normal/true speaking voice and accent, and convincingly sounds like he is from another region or part of the world. Attempting to accurately imitate the voice, inflections and attitude of a specific person is much more difficult, and the character will either need to know the person being imitated very well, or have spent hours studying him/her, and even then there's a penalty of -20%.

The second number indicates the ability to duplicate various calls, screams, chirps and buzzes that are found in the wilderness. Distinctive calls are often used as signals during sneak attacks, with different calls meaning to the people who know them "all is calm/quiet," "guard on watch," "move cautiously," "danger" and "attack!" **Base Skill:** 42%/36% +4% per level of experience. **Bonus:** Add +5% to the Impersonation skill.

**Palming.** Simply the ability to pick up and seemingly make a small object, such as a coin, key, dagger, or playing card, vanish by concealing it in one's hand. Adds a bonus of +5% to the Pick Pockets skill. **Base Skill:** 20% +5% per level of experience.

**Pick Locks.** See *Espionage Skills* for the complete description.

**Pick Pockets.** See *Espionage Skills* for the complete description.

**Prowl.** See *Physical Skills* for the complete description.

**Roadwise.** A regional skill in which the character knows the streets, alleys, back roads, shortcuts, fastest routes, construction zones, speed traps, highways, police stations and posts in his city and state (or province) like the back of his hand. Also knows all the local junkyards, the best mechanic garages (including a few who don't ask questions), and the best places to hide a vehicle or lay low for a few hours or a few days, as well as the best place to "dump" (abandon) a vehicle where it will not be found any time soon (authorities or an enemy must conduct a serious and expansive search to find it – if so roll percentile to see how quickly it is found: 01-25%: 2D4 days, 26-50%: 3D6 days, 51-75% 3D6 weeks, 76-90% 1D4 years, 91-96% 1D4x10 years, 97-00%: Never! **Base Skill:** 26% +4% per level of experience.

**Safecracking.** This is a specialized skill in which the character studies the strengths, weaknesses, and construction of safes and how to open them without damaging the contents inside. The fingers of the safecracker are so sensitive that they can "feel" the subtle calibration of combination locks and other locking mechanisms. When using explosives, they can use their abilities to such precision that they can "blow" the lock off a safe, security door, safe deposit box and similar without creating a big, area effect explosion or inflicting damage to the contents (a failed Safecracking skill or Demolitions roll means the explosion was too much and the contents are damaged). **Base Skill:** 20% +4% per level of experience. **Bonuses:** Adds +5% bonus to the Pick Locks and Demolitions skills. The character gets a +4% bonus if a Locksmith and +6% if a Mechanical Engineer. **Penalties:** Requires focus, concentration and keen hearing, so characters with an M.E. of 14 or less are -10% on this skill.

**Seduction.** This is the ability to make the opposite sex melt with desire. This skill is somewhat similar to the Interrogation skill in that the seducer knows how to ask the right questions to get information without being obvious. The seducer usually seems attentive, sympathetic, alluring and sexy. Men and women who are seduced tend to have loose lips and will spill secrets. They also lose track of time, spend big money to impress and please their seducer, and lavish her or him with their affection, time and attention while oblivious to everything else around them.

Anyone who has been successfully seduced is distracted, skill performance is half and takes twice as long to perform, the character doesn't notice people and events around him/her, and is easily caught off guard (no initiative and all bonuses are at half when attacked by a character other than the seducer). Worse, the victim(s) of seduction is completely vulnerable to the seducer. The seducer always gets the first attack/strike/action, and the victim has no chance at self-defense against that first attack, plus the victim loses one attack/action from surprise or horror. **Base Skill:** 20% +3% per level of experience. **Skill Bonuses:** +1% for every one M.A. attribute point over 20, and every two P.B. points over 17 (round up). So a character with a P.B. of 23 (+3) and M.A. of 24 (+4) would be +7% to successfully seduce. The seducer can influence more than one person at

a time; one additional victim per every three levels of experience. In addition, the seducer is +5% to pick the pockets of, palm, or plant things on his/her victim of seduction, as well as adding +5% to the Cardsharp, Sing, and Dance skills. Also, Seduction victims who are intoxicated or drugged are easier to seduce (+5%).

**Streetwise.** An understanding of the darker side of life and the scoundrels who roam the streets. The streetwise character will be able to recognize gang members by their actions and philosophies, gang colors (emblems and clothing that denote membership to a particular organization), gang symbols and mannerisms, and dangerous locations and gangland haunts. The individual will also recognize a potential brawl situation, assess a gang member's rank/power in the organization, and know some of the hangouts, modes of operation, rituals, ethics, and perhaps even notorious gang leaders of the more infamous street gangs. It also includes knowing the "street names" of common drugs, their symptoms, their cost and recognizing the drug when he sees it, and the danger it represents. **Base Skill:** 20% +4% per level of experience. **Bonus:** +10% to I.D. Undercover Agents.

**Tailing.** The practiced ability to follow someone without their knowledge. Includes basic stake-out procedures. A failed Tailing roll indicates that the character being "tailed" has noticed that he is being followed and may take evasive action to lose the "tail," or confront or attack the person (unless he makes a run for it). Either way, the subject of the "tail" is likely to escape being followed any further. **Base Skill:** 30% +5% per level of experience. **Bonus:** +5% to the Tailing skill if the character also has Prowl. **Note:** *Tailing* is also part of the Surveillance skill.

## Science Skills

**Anthropology.** This is the behavioral study of man and other intelligent life-forms and their environments. Studies include societies, customs and beliefs, religions, and political structure, as well as rudimentary history and archaeological background. It is important to note that anthropology is more concerned with the study of *modern* races and societies than it is with ancient ones. This is especially important when dealing with alien races and cultures in order to avoid accidentally breaking taboos or codes of behavior. It also tells the anthropologist whether he may be dealing with a dangerous people (hate humans, fear technology or magic, are cannibals, worship demons, etc.).

The skill can also be used to examine artifacts and ancient or alien ruins to identify the probable people/race, purpose, culture and technological level. The character can identify the period of time the item was used (contemporary or ancient), and whether it is human or alien, but is not skilled enough to tell whether an artifact is authentic or a forgery. **Note:** The anthropological student is one of the few who is well versed in the myths and legends of the past, and may know a few things about ancient gods, the spirit world, Faerie Folk, dragons, demons and other creatures once thought to have been flights of fancy conjured by the imaginations of primitive people. On the good side, those with a background in anthropology may know things that can help humans communicate with and fight these mythological beings.

**Base Skill:** 40% +5% per level of experience. **Bonuses:** +5% to all Lore Skills and History.

**Archaeology.** This is the scientific study of relics from ancient civilizations by excavation and other means. The skill teaches proper excavation (dig) techniques, analysis, preservation, restoration, and dating methods (including carbon dating), as well as a rudimentary history and anthropology background.

Like the anthropological student, the archaeologist is one of the few who is well versed in the legends and facts of ancient humans. The character can ascertain whether the item is an ancient artifact or of recent construction, and therefore, if an item is an authentic artifact or a forgery. He is also more likely to recognize genuine artifacts, weapons and articles important to certain cults, religions, cultures and peoples. **Base Skill:** 40%/20% +5% per level of experience. The first percentage number applies to the character's historical and archaeological capabilities, the second is his ability to recognize items of significance, as well as his ability to figure out the purpose of the item through examination alone (i.e., without seeing it used in action). **Bonuses:** +10% to History.

**Artificial Intelligence.** Advanced A.I.s range from simple thinking computers and devices with problem solving capabilities, the ability to learn and think independent of an operator, to devices modeled on the neural network of the human mind that can think, learn, solve problems, use subjective logic, create and even imagine.

A character with this science skill understands the many principles and theories behind advanced artificial intelligence, how it works, how the A.I. "thinks" and "understands" the world around it, how to communicate with the machines and how to reprogram them, either directly or by argument. **Requires:** *Advanced Math, Computer Operation* and *Computer Programming*. **Bonuses:** +5% to all other computer skills, including Programming and Hacking. **Base Skill:** 30% +3% per level of experience.

**Astronomy & Navigation.** The study of the stars and other celestial bodies, their movements, positions, cycles, alignments, and interrelations with the planets and each other. This knowledge can also be used to determine direction, approximate distances, identify the seasons, and tell the time of day. Training includes reading maps and star charts, course computation, following landmarks, and the use of navigational equipment. Includes land, air, and water navigation as well as piloting by the stars and instruments alone. This ability is ideal for sailors and those characters who can fly. A failed roll means the navigator is off course. To determine how many miles off course, roll 2D6 miles when traveling on foot, 1D6x10 miles when traveling by horse or car, and 2D4x10 miles when flying or using a boat/ship. Roll once for every hour that one travels in unknown territory or seas. **Base Skill:** 30% +5% per level of experience; +10% bonus if the character has Advanced Mathematics. **Requires:** *Basic Mathematics* and *Literacy* to use instruments, read maps and to chart a course by the stars. Also see *Land Navigation* described under the Wilderness skills.

**Astrophysics.** Knowledge of stellar astronomy and how it relates to nuclear physics, quantum mechanics, relativity and other explanations for the creation of deep space phenomena, like quasars and black holes. **Requires:** *Basic* and *Advanced Mathematics*. **Base Skill:** 35% +5% per level of experience.

**Biology.** Basic understanding of cells, anatomy, physiology, evolution, and genetics. The character will know how to use a microscope, cultivate bacteria, and how to dissect, study, evaluate and classify new organisms. **Base Skill:** 40% +5% per level of experience.

**Botany.** Plants, their categories and functions, are studied extensively. Characters will know the basics of cross-fertilization and germinating, as well as growing experimental plants. **Base Skill:** 40% +5% per level of experience.

**Chemistry.** The basic understanding of chemical principles and formulae. Characters know enough chemical laboratory procedures for analyzing and synthesizing chemical compounds to act as competent assistants. **Base Skill:** 50% +5% per level of experience.

**Chemistry: Analytical.** Training in chemical engineering theories useful in the analysis of compounds and their practical applications. Characters will be highly skilled in the use of laboratory equipment and can analyze and synthesize chemicals. **Base Skill:** 35% +5% per level of experience. **Requires:** *Chemistry, Advanced Mathematics, and Literacy.* Computer Operation is strongly suggested but not required.

**Chemistry: Pharmaceutical.** This is the study of drugs and their interaction with the human body. Knowledge includes a familiarity with common medical drugs, drug interactions, prescribed dosages, the use/distribution of drugs, their effects on the human body, and other biological applications. The character can recognize and prescribe common drugs, knows their effects and side effects, recognizes poisons/toxins, and can safely administer painkillers, hallucinogens, stimulants, relaxants, antibiotics, antidepressants, anti-psychotics, sodium pentothal/truth serum, tranquilizers, sedatives, and so on. **Base Skill:** 40% +5% per level of experience. A failed roll means the drug is improperly administered or prepared, and has no effect.

**Genetics.** With exhaustive study in the theory of genetics, as well as the use of gene therapy, the character has gained a good understanding of how DNA and RNA function, the basics of bio-technology and how to analyze and predict the behavior of genes and chromosomes in various living organisms. Given access to a life form's genetic database (after blood has been scanned and analyzed), characters with the Genetics skill can make predictions about the creature's anatomy, biology, character and appearance, as well as whether or not the creature is sterile. **Requires:** *Advanced Math, Chemistry and Biology.* **Base Skill:** 30% +3% per level of experience.

**Mathematics (Basic).** Knowledge of basic math, including the ability to count, addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, and fractions. **Base Skill:** 72% +3% per level of experience.

**Mathematics (Advanced).** Knowledge of all basic and advanced mathematics, including algebra, geometry, trigonometry, calculus, and techniques for using advanced mathematical formulae. In this highly educated and literate society, the base skill is considerable. **Base Skill:** 64% +2% per level of experience.

**Parapsychology.** An offshoot from Psychology in which the practitioner studies claims of ESP (Extrasensory Perception), mind powers, mind over matter, and paranormal phenomena. The latter includes ghost hunting and investigating claims of the supernatural because the supernatural is so often linked with the

paranormal and ESP. The skill teaches a scientific approach and methodology to investigating, testing and studying the paranormal. **Base Skill:** 30% +5% per level of experience. **Requires:** *Biology, Psychology and Literacy.*

**Psychology.** See the skill description under *Medical Skills.*

**Zoology.** An academic knowledge of wildlife, nature and habits, including domesticated and wild animals. This includes knowledge of animal habitats, behavior, instincts, mating, hunting, food or favored prey, breeding, physiology and biology, flight/fight responses, natural weapons and defenses, the best way to handle the animals, and so on. This skill may be specialized by taking the skill twice. When specialized, the character receives a one time bonus of +20% to the skill when dealing with that one specific type/species of animal (e.g., apes, snakes, bovine, etc.). **Bonuses:** +5% to the *Herding* and *Track & Trap Animals* skills, and +10% to Veterinary Science. **Base Skill:** 30% +5% per level of experience.

## Technical Skills

**Appraise Goods.** A trained eye able to assess the quality and true market value of "ordinary" commodities, such as tools, household goods, clothing, furniture, jewelry, gems, art, basic vehicles (hovercycles, cars, motorcycles, bicycles, etc.), common artifacts (books, films, toys, household goods), land, and similar *common* trade goods. Does *not* include military or high-tech goods. The character knows the item's current retail market value, wholesale value, approximate cost, how much he can get in trade or what he can sell it for wholesale (to a store/business owner for resale; about 20-50% of its true value) and retail (open market or retail store; 70-100% of its true value). **Base Skill:** 30% +5% per level of experience.

**Art.** The ability to draw, paint and/or sculpt or do craft work. Selection as an Elective Skill indicates a professional quality, while selection as a Secondary Skill indicates a talented amateur. **Base Skill:** 35% +5% per level of experience.

**Barter:** A skill at bargaining with merchants, businessmen, thieves, traders and other characters to get a fair price or fair exchange of trade goods or services. Depending on the character's point of view and effort at bartering, he can raise the amount he gets or lower the price he pays by 3D6+2%; not applicable to rare and exotic items or advanced technology. Generally, if the haggler rolls under his Bartering skill percentage, he gets the discount when buying or the better price when he is the one doing the selling or trading. If the price is disputed, the two bartering characters can each make rolls on percentile dice, the highest roll wins and gets their price and not a penny less or nickel more. **Base Skill:** 30% +4% per level of experience.

**Breed Dogs.** The first percentile number indicates the art of raising, mating/breeding, taming and training domestic and wild canines, as well as a knowledge about canines in general.

The second percentile number is used to attempt to tame a wild canine, teach a dog tricks, or to train the animal for a specific task like tracking, retrieving, pointing, herding animals, attacking on command, and so on. A failed roll means that the animal refuses to learn that particular trick or specialty. Note: These are trained work animals or pets, not familiars. **Base Skill:** 40%/20% +5% per level of experience.

**Business and Finance.** This skill represents a basic understanding of business, management, banking and the financial world. The character can set up a business, prepare mission statements, business proposals, and stockholder reports, manage and supervise others, handle all aspects of a small business, or get work as a stockbroker or advisor. **Requires:** *Literacy* and *Basic Mathematics*. **Base Skill:** 35%+5% per level of experience.

**Computer Operation.** A knowledge of how computers work, along with the skills to operate peripherals like keyboards, printers, and modems. The character can follow computer directions, enter and retrieve information, install programs, games and software, use the web/internet and similar basic computer operations. Does *not* include Repair, Programming or Hacking. **Base Skill:** 60% +3% per level of experience. **Requires:** *Literacy*.

**Computer Programming.** Advanced computer knowledge that includes designing, programming, debugging, and testing computer programs and software. Hacking is possible, but at a penalty of -40% unless the character also has the Computer Hacking skill (see *Rogue Skills*). **Base Skill:** 50% +3% per level of experience. **Requires:** *Computer Operation* and *Literacy*.

**Excavation.** A mixed bag of abilities that includes finding one's direction underground, estimating one's approximate depth, "digging out" and identifying relics and evidence from debris, collapsed tunnels and the earth, as well as digging out and fording up/repairing collapsed tunnels, underground chambers and caves. The skill gives the character a good understanding of how to best perform an excavation without any major setbacks, where to dig, what is the best type of soil, how deep to go, how to pack and secure tunnel walls and ceilings, where to place support beams and what building materials to use in underground construction. **Note:** Tunnels and excavation sites that are made quickly are not permanent, and can be collapsed by gunfire, earthquakes, traffic vibrations, etc. Trying excavations without this skill is just asking for trouble and is performed on pure luck. **Bonus:** +5% to the *Dowsing* skill when looking for an underground river or spring and +5% to *Spelunking* skill. **Base Skill:** 30% +5% per level of experience.

**Firefighting.** A basic understanding of fire and how it works, breathes, and travels, as well as firefighting methods and techniques, rescue procedures, and the practiced use of firefighting tools, equipment and gear. **Base Skill:** 40% +5% per level of experience.

**Gemology.** Skill in identifying and appraising the value of precious metals (silver, gold, etc.) and stones (jade, emerald, ruby, sapphire, diamond, etc.). This ability also enables the person to identify fakes, but at a penalty of -10%. A failed roll means the character cannot tell whether or not the item is fake or real, or its value is grossly under or overestimated. **Base Skill:** 25% +5% per level of experience.

**General Repair & Maintenance.** Not everyone can be a mechanic, blacksmith or carpenter, but many are good with their hands and capable of doing satisfactory repairs on simple mechanisms, gears, pulleys, wheels, rope, and so on. The General Repair & Maintenance skill includes: sharpening blades, minor repairs on weapons, packing their own S.D.C. bullets, sewing tears in clothes (it may not look pretty, but does the job), changing a tire, shoeing a horse, repairing furniture, painting, varnish-

ing, nailing and assisting in basic woodworking, and even doing minor patchwork on armor (restores 1D8 S.D.C.). Roll once to see whether the character can figure out what is broken, what must be done to fix it, and whether it is beyond his meager abilities to repair. Roll again to determine success or failure in making the actual repair. If failure, the player may try again, but only twice. **Base Skill:** 45% +5% per level of experience. Reduce skill proficiency by half if the item is extremely damaged, complex, high-tech or alien.

**History.** The first percentile number represents a very general historical knowledge of the world and the most famous myths, legends, people and events.

The second percentile number indicates a more in-depth knowledge of a particular subject or region in the world (pick by nation or continent). **For example:** History of North America is a deep knowledge about the United States, Canada and Mexico, their origin, leaders, key figures in history and science, lore, religions, traditions, famous people, and so on, as well as the myths and legends of the indigenous people (i.e., Native American Indians, Inuit, Aztec, etc.). Narrowing the focus to just one of those countries (i.e., Mexico or the US or Canada) gives the character less knowledge of the continent as a whole, but deeper historical knowledge of that one particular country.

An example of a historical "subject" might include Military History (or a more narrow but deeper subject might be the American Civil War, or Napoleonic Wars or World War II), industry, science, music, art, and so on. This skill may be taken repeatedly to cover multiple regions of the world or various subjects. Thus, a character who takes this skill three times might apply it to North America, Western Europe, and Russia. The base skill percentage indicates the approximate degree of information the character has learned or can remember accurately. **Base Skill:** 60%/40% +4% per level of experience.

**Jury-Rig.** A character with this skill can repair almost anything, and even build something out of scrap components. There is no guarantee that the jury-rig will hold for very long (4D6 hours or 2D4 days, whichever is most appropriate), or will even work in the way intended (roll again, a failed roll means the system is only 50% functional), but it may well save a character's life until they can acquire the proper parts, buy a new unit or get a skilled mechanic to do the job right. **Requirements:** At least *Basic Mechanics* and *Basic Electronics*, Engineering skills are even better. **Base Skill:** 25% +5% per level of experience (add an extra +10% bonus if the character is an Electrical or Mechanical Engineer or Field Armorer).

**Law (General).** The character knows what constitutes a criminal act, the typical punishment and many legal precedents, procedures and decisions common throughout a particular nation, country or region. This can be an invaluable skill when trying to determine if someone is breaking the law, how grave or petty the criminal act is, and in determining the level of action to take against it. The skill is also important for making a criminal charge stick, setting bail, using legal protocol, and defending those unjustly accused. The character also knows the legal protocol and proper conduct for conducting searches, police investigations and other aspects of law enforcement. **Base Skill:** 35% +5% per level.

**Leather Working.** Skill at tanning, preserving and working with animal hides, fur and leather to make leather goods such as

clothing, capes, caps, bags, purses, boots, shoes, belts, and even S.D.C. leather armor (the character can repair leather armor too). A failed roll indicates that the hide is ruined and the leather is wasted. **Base Skill:** 45% +5% per level of experience.

**Masonry.** A rudimentary understanding of the principles of bricklaying and stone construction. The percentile number indicates the success ratio of recognizing deterioration, improper construction, the intended purpose of construction, styles of masonry, approximate age or period of construction, and general data about mason guilds. The character can also mend masonry and assist in construction and demolition. **Base Skill:** 40% +5% per level of experience.

**Meditation.** The *skill* of meditation teaches techniques and methods for relaxation, clearing the mind and spiritual focus. The skill enables the character to calm himself down under stressful or serious situations (reduce skill penalties by half, but requires at least 10 minutes of meditation), and every hour of meditation increases normal healing by 30%. (Also recover *Base I.S.P.* or *P.P.E.* at a rate of two points per hour when applicable.) **Base Skill:** 30% +5% per level of experience.

**Mining.** Methods and practices used in prospecting, panning for gold, identifying minerals, digging mine shafts and finding and pumping water from underground sources. Includes the use of mining equipment, refining gear, and explosives. The use of explosives is a very basic use for the purpose of blasting (same as Demolitions but with a -20% penalty). A character with the Mining skill can also tell the quality of refined mineral products, and will know about many of the current mining operations in the area. **Base Skill:** 35% +5% per level of experience.

**Navigation:** Training in map reading, star charts, course computation, following landmarks, and use of navigational equipment. Includes land, air, and water navigation, as well as piloting by instruments alone. A failed roll means the pilot is off course. Roll 2D6x100 for most aircraft, 4D6x100 for jets, and 2D6x10 for ground vehicles to determine how many miles/kilometers they are off course. Roll for every hour that one is off course. This skill enables characters to pilot ships and other water vessels that ride on the surface of the water by charting the stars and landmarks and using instruments. Likewise, the character can navigate submersibles using instruments and other data. Navigating marine vessels is an aspect of the standard Navigation skill. **Base Skill:** 40% +5% per level of experience. **Requires:** *Basic Mathematics, Sensory Equipment, and Literacy.*

**Philosophy:** The principles of philosophy, ethics and morals, methods for effective debating and examining a subject from a wide perspective, and touch upon aspects of sociology and social consciousness. **Base Skill:** 40% +5% per level of experience.

**Photography.** Training in the art of still photography using the traditional 35 mm camera *and* digital cameras. Also teaches the use of lighting, camera tricks, lenses, filters, and other camera equipment, as well as storage, development/printing, enlargement, duplication of film/photos, computer scanning and computer enhancements, alterations, and printing. **Base Skill:** 35% +5% per level of experience.

**Prospecting.** The character can recognize and evaluate precious and semi-precious metals (gold, fool's gold, silver,

bronze, copper) in their natural ore appearance and as refined and polished jewelry. In addition, the character has a good idea where to look for such mineral deposits, and the fundamentals of "panning" for gold and the general knowledge of mining and how to use various types of simple mining equipment. Furthermore, the character can identify and appraise the value of precious metals (silver, gold, etc.) and stones (diamonds, rubies, etc.), and identify fakes, but at a penalty of -10%. A failed roll means the character cannot tell whether or not the item is fake or real, or he grossly under or overestimates its value. **Base Skill:** 20% +5% per level of experience.

**Recycling.** Recycling covers everything, but typically includes paper, lumber, plastic, glass, scrap metal, electrical wiring and components, circuit boards and machine parts. This is not like the Jury-Rig skill; a character with Recycle cannot make something out of odd components but, given some time and equipment, he can strip down a damaged machine to its *basic component parts* or gather useful materials to repair an existing machine or build something new. Has a very rudimentary understanding of metallurgy. **Base Skill:** 30% +5% per level of experience.

**Research.** Training in the use of methods, techniques, and means of finding information, including public records, libraries, interviews, surveys, demographics, trade journals, the Internet and legal searches. This skill is helpful in locating information about people, places and things. The G.M. should ultimately regulate the availability of accessible, known information regarding a particular subject. Any character can do research and ask questions, but the Research skill will reduce the amount of time needed by half and the character is trained to notice relevant information that an untrained character is liable to overlook. Thus, for truly secret or difficult information, you must have the character with the Research skill try to uncover it. Only roll to determine success on researching these difficult or hushed up bits of information. **Base Skill:** 40% +5% per level of experience.

**Rope Works.** This is a skill that takes into account the various needs and uses of rope. The character knows a variety of ways to tie knots, the advantages to various types of ropes and cords, their tensile strength and how to weave/make rope. A failed roll to tie a knot means that it is loose and sloppy and easy to untie, slip out of, or likely to unravel or snap when strained. **Base Skill:** 30% +5% per level of experience. Characters bound/tied by this character are -10% to escape/slip knots.

**Salvage.** This skill allows characters to find, identify, pick up, strip down, evaluate and possibly sell, any debris, wreckage and junk that they can locate. They can also strip a piece of wrecked machinery for spare parts and may even be able to make something work again, given time, enough parts and the right skills. **Base Skill:** 35% +5% per level of experience.

**Technical Writing.** Training in writing and presenting outlines, documentation, instructions, procedures, studies, and proposals. The writing tends to be dry and reads like a manual, which is exactly what it is. Also applicable to scientific, medical, military, engineering, and computer papers written in technical terms for fellow professionals and scientific journals. **Base Skill:** 30% +5% per level of experience.

**Ventriloquism.** The practiced ability to throw one's voice. This can be used to create the illusion of not speaking while

making a voice or verbal noise appear to be coming from someone or something else, such as a puppet, a tree, box, chair, etc. Maximum range is 10 feet (3 m) away. A failed roll means the voice is not well thrown or the ventriloquist's mouth is seen moving, so the trick does not work. **Base Skill:** 16% +4% per level of experience.

**Whittling & Sculpting.** The art of carving wood, bone and horn into three dimensional figures/statues/toys, designs, and simple objects like wooden stakes, arrows, fishing hooks, walking sticks, staves, bowls, a simple flute or whistle, and similar. Many characters with this skill simply use it to pass time and don't necessarily make anything from their whittling. The percentile number indicates the quality of technique and the quality of the work/appearance. Taking the skill twice indicates a professional quality and gets a bonus of +10%. Selecting it once indicates a talented amateur. **Base Skill:** 30% +5% per level of experience.

## Transportation Skills

**Aircraft: Helicopter.** The specialized skill required to fly all types of commercial helicopters. **Base Skill:** 52% +3% per level of experience.

**Aircraft: Jet.** Includes large and small commercial transport jets. **Base Skill:** 60% +3% per level of experience.

**Airplanes: Propeller Types.** Includes old propeller, single and twin engine types. **Base Skill:** 50% +4% per level of experience.

**Automobile.** Manual and automatic transmission; includes dune buggies, jeeps, and small trucks. **Base Skill:** 60% +3% per level of experience.

**Bicycling.** Means the character can ride over rough terrain, reach two times normal running speed and travel cross-country at normal running speed, and perform tricks and jumps (roll skill level; failed roll means a crash). Maximum speed can be maintained for a time equal to the P.E.x5 in minutes. Skill also in-

cludes basic maintenance/repairs. **Base Skill:** 60% +3% per level of experience.

**Boats: Motor, Race & Hydrofoil Types.** These include all types of small motor driven boats, racing craft and yachts. **Base Skill:** 55% +5% per level of experience.

**Boats: Sail Types.** Small sailing and medium-sized sailing yachts, and fishing boats. **Base Skill:** 60% +5% per level of experience.

**Boats: Ships/Seamanship.** An in-depth knowledge about *sailing vessels*, large and small, as well as the terms and principles of sailing. The character knows how to sail, whether it be in belaying, hauling, dropping or trimming sail, which means he also knows the difference between a crossjack, a mizzenmast, a fore lower topgallant and a hundred other names for specific sails, ropes, masts and yards. The skill also includes being able to judge, evaluate and repair sails, ropes and rigging (every sailor has to be handy with a needle and thread), and operate the pumps needed to remove the water that collects in the bilge, as well as knowing how to braid rope, and the basics of cleaning and maintaining a vessel. **Base Skill:** 35%/20% +5% per level of experience. The first number is for small sailing vessels and general sailing knowledge, the second number is for piloting large ships on the open seas. **Requires:** Must also have the *Sewing* and *Rope Works* skills.

**Combat Driving.** This skill supplements other driving skills by helping to make the character a master of the roads when driving automobiles, jeeps, trucks, motorcycles and other ground vehicles. It helps to turn the character into an aggressive road-hog and cool-headed "chicken" player. In fact, tricks, dangerous maneuvers and high-speed car chases are challenging and fun for this daredevil, although his passengers are likely to fear for their lives.

In game mechanics, skill penalties for tricks, vehicular attacks (ram, sideswipe, etc.), and evasive maneuvers are reduced by half, plus the character is +2 to dodge when driving, +2 to survive a crash/impact, can fire a weapon from a moving vehicle



at only a -2 penalty, and can even make an Aimed or “Called Shot” (at -2 to strike) while on a *moving* vehicle (or talk, or engage in some other activity while driving without penalty). This is a supplemental piloting skill applicable only to ground vehicles and does not have a base skill or level of progression other than reducing penalties an additional one point per level of the driver’s experience.

**Kayaking & Canoeing.** Allows the use of most paddled boats and canoes, rowboats and knee boards, as well as the Kayak. Speed in still water is usually equal to the character’s P.S. attribute (treated for all purposes as Spd) and can be maintained for P.E. x5 in minutes without pause. The skill also includes basic principles behind using currents, maintenance, and even “tricks” like sculling and right-siding a flipped canoe, etc. **Base Skill:** 50% +5% per level.

**Motorcycles & Snowmobiles.** This skill includes the piloting of all two- and three-wheeled vehicles such as motorcycles of all types, dirt bikes, and mopeds as well as snowmobiles, jet sleds, miniature ATVs and other scaled-down vehicles. **Base Skill:** 60% +4% per level of experience.

**Skateboards.** Skill at riding and performing jumps and stunts, on a skateboard. Triples the rider’s running speed. Can also ride snow board but at -10% skill penalty. Bonuses while riding a skateboard: +2 to dodge, +1 to roll with impact. **Base Skill:** 40% +5% per level of experience (the Scroungers O.C.C. gets +10% bonus when characters of that O.C.C. selects this skill).

**Tracked Vehicles.** Includes landcrawlers, half-tracks, light tanks, tractors, and heavy construction vehicles (bulldozers, steam shovels, etc.). **Base Skill:** 54% +4% per level of experience. Can pilot tanks and APCs but at a -15% penalty and -1 attack per melee round.

**Truck.** Specifically applies to driving large cargo and transport vehicles like eight- to sixteen-wheeled commercial trucks and multi-ton transports. **Base Skill:** 56% +4% per level of experience.

**Water Scooters.** The knowledge and skill of piloting all types of one- and two-man water sleds (underwater) and jet skis (surface sleds). **Base Skill:** 50% +5% per level of experience.

**Water Skiing & Surfing.** All water skiing techniques, methods and use of most types of recreational forms of “riding the waves,” including skis, water jet scooters, water boards, surfboards and sail boards. **Base Skill:** 40% +4% per level of experience.

## Weapon Proficiencies

**Note:** Each W.P. provides combat training with a particular type of weapon. Each W.P. counts as one skill. The character may select several W.P.s or a few. Characters can use *any* weapon without a W.P., but without benefit of the W.P. bonuses.

There are two categories of Weapon Proficiencies, *Ancient* and *Modern*. These are somewhat misleading, since what they really refer to is unpowered melee type weapons (swords, spears, etc.) and modern, powered weapons (guns of every stripe).

## W.P. Ancient Weapons

**A note about Weapon Proficiencies (W.P.):** Each W.P. provides combat training with a particular type of weapon. The result is hand to hand combat bonuses to strike and parry whenever that particular weapon is used. Bonuses that increase for that particular weapon are accumulative and are combined with the character’s P.P. attribute, O.C.C., and Hand to Hand Combat skill bonuses. The *Damage* stat indicates the number of damage dice rolled to inflict the appropriate amount of damage for that type of weapon. Damage starts as S.D.C. and when S.D.C. are gone, damage comes off the Hit Points (H.P.). As a rule, the larger or better quality the weapon, the greater the damage.

**W.P. Archery.** An expertise with bow weapons of all kinds. The character can use all manner of bows and arrows, including short bows, long bows, all types of modern compound bows, harpoon guns and crossbow pistols, and repeating, light and heavy crossbows. **Bonuses:** +1 to strike at levels 1, 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12 and 14. +1 to parry with a bow weapon (effective at level one), and +1 to disarm at levels 2, 5, 10 and 15. **Rate of Fire:** Two shots per melee round at level one and an extra shot per melee round is added at levels 2, 4, 5, 8, 10, 12 and 14. **Range:** See list below, and a trained archer may try a shot at 50% greater distance but does so without benefit of any bonus to strike or disarm. **Note:** The character loses all bonuses and reduce the rate of fire by half when running and shooting, flying, riding on horseback or when shooting from a moving vehicle or while otherwise unbalanced.

Average Ranges & S.D.C. Damage per Arrow:

Short Bow – 340 feet (104 m) – 1D6 damage.

Long Bow – 640 feet (195 m) – 2D6 damage.

Compound Bow – 700 feet (213 m) – 2D6+1 damage.

Harpoon Gun – 120 feet (36.5 m) – 1D10 damage.

Light Crossbow – 340 feet (104 m) – 2D4 damage.

Heavy Crossbow (large) – 600 feet (182 m) – 2D8 damage.

Pistol Crossbow (small) – 120 feet (36.5 m) – 1D6 damage.

**W.P. Axe.** Training with all types of large axe weapons, including single blade and double-headed axes and picks. **Damage:** 2D6 or 2D8 damage depending on the size and style of the battle axe (small axes and hatchets do 1D6 damage). **Bonuses:** +1 to strike and parry at levels 2, 5, 8, 12, and 15. +1 to strike when thrown or to parry at levels 5, 8, and 12; not designed for throwing.

**W.P. Blunt.** Training with all types of blunt weapons, including maces, hammers, cudgels, pipes, staves, and clubs. **Damage:** Typically 1D6 and 2D4, with only the largest and spiked weapons doing 2D6 damage. **Bonuses:** +1 to strike and parry at levels 1, 3, 6, 9, and 12. +1 to strike when thrown at levels 5, 10, and 15; not designed for throwing.

**W.P. Chain.** Training with all types of chain weapons, including ordinary lengths of chain, the flail, ball or mace and chain, nunchaku, and similar. While chain weapons can be used one-handed, it’s only possible to parry while the weapon is being wielded in two hands. **Damage:** Typically 2D6 damage, though the largest and Goupillon Flails (three spiked balls) do 3D6 damage. **Bonuses:** +1 to strike at levels 1, 3, 7, 10, and 13. +1 to parry at levels 4, 8, and 12. This weapon cannot be used to

entangle and cannot be thrown with any accuracy; -3 to strike when thrown.

**W.P. Forked.** Includes small weapons such as the sai and tiger fork, to large weapons such as the pitchfork, military fork and trident, as well as other weapons with tines. When wielding two-handed (large weapons) or with one in each hand (small weapons, with W.P. Paired Weapons), it's possible to catch enemy swords with a successful entangle. **Damage:** Small forked weapons (like the sai or tiger fork) do 1D8 damage, while most large forked (spear-like) weapons do 2D6 damage, but the trident does 2D8. **Bonuses:** Starts with +1 to strike or entangle at levels 1, 3, 5, 8, 11, and 13. +1 to parry at levels 1, 3, 6, 10, and 13. +1 to strike when thrown at levels 4, 10, and 15; not really designed for throwing.

**W.P. Grappling Hook.** Trained use of a grappling hook for climbing (adds +5% to that skill when a grappling hook is used), scaling walls, boarding vessels, or snagging objects. Tripping an opponent is done by hooking the foot, ankle or leg. It does little damage, but successfully knocking an opponent to the ground causes the victim to lose their initiative and one melee attack. **Damage:** When used in hand to hand the most damage a grappling hook does is 1D4 damage, but when swung and then pulled back into a victim, the impaling damage is 1D6. **Bonuses:** +1 to strike or entangle when thrown/swung at levels 3, 6, 9 and 12. This weapon *cannot* be used to parry!

**W.P. Knife.** Training with all types of daggers and knives. **Damage:** Very small 1D4 damage, and typical 1D6. **Bonuses:** +1 to strike at levels 2, 4, 7, 10, and 13. +1 to parry at levels 1, 3, 6, 9 and 12. +1 to strike when thrown at levels 1, 3, 6, 8, 10, and 13.

**W.P. Paired Weapons.** A tactic in which a one-handed weapon is held in each hand to be used in any combination of combat moves simultaneously. For example, two short swords, or a short sword and broadsword, sword and knife, mace and shield, and so on. Two-handed weapons cannot be used as a Paired Weapon. Users of Paired Weapons can:

1. *Strike and parry simultaneously.* In other words, those skilled in W.P. Paired Weapons can often perform two actions for every one melee action/attack.

2. *Twin, simultaneous strikes* against the same target. Both weapons hit at once, but it is considered ONE melee attack/action (roll only once to strike). The defender under attack can only try to parry one of the two weapons coming at him for his defensive parry. The other will strike unless he too is using two weapons, or a weapon and a shield, and has the W.P. Paired Weapons skill to try and block both simultaneous attacks.

3. *Strike two different targets* (or strike one and parry another incoming attack), simultaneously; both must be within reach.

4. Parry two different attackers, one with each hand.

**W.P. Pole Arm.** Training with all types of large, bladed spear-like weapons, including the glaive, sabre halberd, runka, scythe and voulge, among others. **Damage:** Typically 2D8, with the largest doing 3D6; only the Voulge does 4D6 damage. **Bonuses:** +2 damage at levels 2 and 8. +1 to strike and parry at levels 1, 3, 6, 9 and 12. +1 to strike when thrown at levels 3, 8, and 12; not designed for throwing.

**W.P. Quick Draw.** A practiced move in which the character gets an initiative bonus to draw and fire or throw his weapons

much faster at the first sign of danger. Note that characters with a high P.P. benefit most from this skill. **Bonuses:** +1 on initiative for characters with a P.P. of 17 or less, +2 on initiative for those with a P.P. of 18 to 23, +3 on initiative for those with a P.P. of 24 to 30 and +4 to initiative for characters with a P.P. of 31 or above.

**W.P. Shield.** Combat skills with large and small shields used primarily for parrying and self defense. **Damage:** 1D6 as a blunt weapon. **Bonuses:** +1 to parry at levels 1, 3, 7, 10 and 13. A shield can be used in one hand and a weapon in the other. +1 to strike with a shield (1D4 damage) at levels 4, 8, and 12. No bonus to strike when thrown. A shield cannot be used to block bullets or energy blasts, at least not easily. Any such attempt is done without any bonuses (straight die roll), with a penalty of -8 to parry! Blocking thrown knives, spears, arrows and other weapons is basically the same but is only -3 to parry on an unmodified die roll. The shield has limited S.D.C. and only really takes damage when used to block energy blasts or explosions, or is specifically targeted by an opponent with the intention of destroying or chopping through the shield.

Damage to shields (optional): Subtract 10% of the damage that would normally be inflicted by a weapon when blocked/parried by a shield. When all S.D.C. is gone, the shield has too many holes, cracks and weaknesses to offer protection. The next strike will punch right through or shatter it and hit the user at full force and full damage.

**W.P. Slingshot.** Combat skill with a sportsman version of the "Y" shaped kid's toy. Fires small metal balls/bearings or bee-bee gun style pellets, and may shoot stones and other small hard objects as well. Also includes skill in the ancient style of sling. **Damage:** Metal balls designed for sport and target practice do 1D8 damage, stones and most other small hard projectiles do 1D4 damage. **Bonuses:** +1 to strike at levels 2, 5, 9, and 12. Loading and firing count as one melee attack/action. Maximum Range: 150 feet (45.7 m).

**W.P. Spear.** Combat skill with large and small spears and javelins (the use of a rifle equipped with a bayonet also falls into this category). **Damage:** Short spear or javelin 1D6 damage. Long spear 2D6 damage. **Bonuses:** +1 to strike and parry at levels 1, 3, 6, 9, and 12. +1 to strike when thrown at levels 3, 6, 10 and 14. Maximum Throwing Range: 150 feet (45.7 m).

**W.P. Staff.** Combat skill with large and small staffs. **Damage:** Short Staff 1D6, Long Staff 2D4, and Bo Staff or Quarter Staff 2D6 damage. Typically made of wood. **Bonuses:** +1 to strike at levels 1, 3, 7, 10 and 13. +1 to parry at 2, 5, 8, 11 and 14. +1 to strike when thrown at levels 5, 10, and 15; not designed for throwing.

**W.P. Sword.** Combat skills with large and small swords, including fencing type training, includes rapiers, sabers, broadswords, large swords and short swords. **Damage:** Short Sword or Saber: 2D4, Falchion or Scimitar: 2D6, Broadsword: 1D8+1, Long Sword and other large swords: 2D6, Claymore, Flamberge and other extremely large swords: 3D6 damage. **Bonuses:** +1 to strike at levels 1, 3, 6, 9, 12 and 15. +1 to parry at levels 2, 4, 7, 10 and 13. +1 to strike when thrown at levels 4, 8, and 12; swords are not designed for being thrown.

**W.P. Targeting.** Expertise with thrown and projectile weapons (but not bows and arrows, crossbows, or guns), such as the



sling, slingshot, boomerangs, shurikens, throwing knives, throwing sticks, axes (small) and spears, even siege weapons. **Bonuses:** +1 to strike at levels 1, 3, 7 and 10. Characters who select both W.P. Targeting and another W.P. for a missile weapon (but not thrown swords, large axes, staves, etc.) get the usual bonuses for that W.P., plus the bonus from W.P. Targeting. Can also throw two small items, like knives, shurikens or throwing sticks, simultaneously at the same target. **Requires:** Any one W.P. for a missile weapon such as a spear. **Note:** The character loses all bonuses and the rate of fire is half, when running and shooting or throwing, flying, when riding on horseback or from a moving vehicle, or otherwise unbalanced.

#### Typical Effective Range & Damage per Weapon Type:

Bolas: 30 feet (9 m) – 2D4 damage.

Blowgun: 30 feet (9 m) – 1D4 damage.

Boomerangs: 60 feet (18 m) – 1D6 damage.

Brick or stone, thrown: 50 feet (15.2 m) – 1D6 damage.

Dart: 30 feet (9 m) – 1D4 damage.

Javelin: 300 feet (91.5 m) – 1D6 damage.

Net: 30 feet (9 m) – No damage.

Pitch Fork: 30 feet (9 m) – 1D8 damage.

Sling or Slingshot: 80 feet (24 m) – 1D6 damage.

Spear, thrown: 100 feet (30.5 m) – 1D6 or 2D6 damage.

Throwing Sticks and Knives: 40 feet (12.2 m) – 1D6 damage.

Throwing Axes: 40 feet (12.2 m) – 2D4 damage.

Trident: 50 feet (15.2 m) – 2D8 damage.

**Note:** W.P. Targeting does a Critical Strike (double damage) on a Natural 19 or 20 (unmodified die roll to strike). Swords, large axes, chairs, frying pans, hammers, clubs, maces, pole arms and most other handheld weapons are *not* designed to be thrown. Consequently, the average throwing range is a mere 20 feet (6 m) and the character is -1 to strike. An attacker can try to throw such weapons farther, but is -3 to strike for every additional 10 feet (3 m) beyond 20 (6 m). Spears, javelins, slings, throwing knives/sticks/axes can be thrown/fired by anybody without penalty at the typical effective range listed above.

**W.P. Whip.** Skill at “whipping” or snapping with long, lightweight, flexible weapons, typically made of leather or reeds. **Damage:** Light Whip 1D6, or Heavy Whip, Bull Whip or Cat-O-Nine-Tails 2D6. **Bonuses:** +1 to strike, disarm or entangle at levels 2, 4, 7, 10, and 13. +1 to damage at levels 2, 4, 8, and 12. This weapon cannot be used to parry and cannot be thrown.

## W.P. Modern Weapons

**No Weapon Proficiency (W.P.).** Anybody who does not have a W.P. in a particular weapon type *CAN* pick up a gun and use it, but does so without benefit of any bonuses. Furthermore, the untrained shooter does *not* know how to reload or clean the weapon or anything about ammunition, the gun’s kick, how to use a gun sight to aim accurately, or anything about guns or gun safety – all he can do is pick it up, aim as best he can and pull the trigger. **Note:** A character with no gun proficiency rolls 1D20 with *no* bonuses to strike, can *NOT* make an *Aimed Shot* or a *Called Shot* and suffers a penalty of -3 to strike with burst attacks, -5 to strike when shooting a machine-gun or other heavy

weapon, and -6 when shooting wild. P.P. attribute bonuses and Hand to Hand Combat bonuses do *NOT* apply to modern weapons.

**W.P. Handguns:** A familiarity with all types of handguns including revolvers and pistols. Revolvers are the classic cylinder-based “six shooter.” Pistols are “automatic” weapons which means the gun keeps firing while the trigger is depressed and doesn’t stop until the trigger is released or the ammunition is spent.

**Damage:** Light caliber guns: 2D6 to 3D6 S.D.C. Medium caliber guns: 3D6 to 4D6 S.D.C. Heavy/large caliber handguns: 4D6 (.45 automatic) to 6D6 S.D.C. (Magnum revolvers). *Double damage* for a standard *short burst* (three rounds/bullets fired), but only pistols (not revolvers) can fire in bursts.

**Average Range:** 140 feet (42.7 m).

**Typical Payload:** Revolver: Six bullets. Automatic Pistol: 8-16 rounds.

**W.P. Bonuses:** +1 to strike at levels 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, and 14.

**W.P. Rifles:** A familiarity with the very accurate, single shot, bolt-action style of rifles used for hunting and sniping, and automatic and semi-automatic, military assault rifles like the M-16 and AK-47.

**Damage:** Light caliber rifles: 5D6 per single round. Medium caliber rifles: 6D6 S.D.C. per single bullet. Heavy/large caliber rifles: 7D6 to 1D6x10+3 S.D.C. per single round. *Double damage* for a standard *short burst* (three rounds/bullets fired). *Triple damage* for a *long burst* (six rounds/bullets fired) but counts as two melee attacks. **Note:** Only semi-automatic and automatic rifles can fire a three round burst. Only bolt-action and semi-automatic rifles can be used for sniping and firing a *single* bullet.

**Average Range:** 1300 feet (396 m), +500 feet (152 m; that’s 1800 feet/548.6 m total) for precision bolt-action rifles.

**Typical Payload:** Bolt-Action Rifles, Semi-Automatic, and Light to Heavy Caliber Rifles: 5-20 rounds loaded by hand or by one box magazine/ammo clip. Automatic Assault Rifles: 20-50 round magazines, with some capable of taking a 100 round drum.

**W.P. Bonuses:** +1 to strike at levels 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11 and 13.

**W.P. Shotgun:** A familiarity with the classic double-barrel shotgun and police and military versions of shotguns with ammo drums.

**Damage:** Buckshot: 2D6 S.D.C. (half damage for rock salt) to a 10 foot (3 m) radius; two S.D.C. (stings like the dickens) for riot control rubber bullets. Light Shot: 3D6 S.D.C., Medium Shot: 4D6 to 5D6, Heavy Shot/Large Bore: 6D6 S.D.C. **Note:** In all examples listed above, damage is for a single round, double the damage if both barrels are fired simultaneously.

**Average Range:** Sawed-Off: 60 feet (18.3 m), Hunting: 200 feet (61 m), and Police/Military Shotgun: 300 feet (91.5 m).

**Typical Payload:** 2-6 in common shotguns, 20, 50 and 100 round ammo drums for police and military style (each single blast counts as one melee attack; can’t fire two simultaneous blasts but has rapid-fire and larger payload).

**W.P. Bonuses:** +1 to strike at levels 1, 3, 6, 10, and 14.

**W.P. Submachine-Gun:** A familiarity with small arms automatic weapons like the Uzi.

Damage: 4D6 S.D.C. per single round or 1D4x10 S.D.C. per three round burst.

Average Range: 500-600 feet (152 to 183 m; an Uzi is the latter range).

Typical Payload: Fires pistol rounds. A single bullet does 3D6+1 S.D.C., 6D6+3 for a three round burst, 1D6x10+4 for a *long burst* (six rounds/bullets fired) but counts as two melee attacks. **Note:** Can only fire in bursts.

W.P. Bonuses: +1 to strike at levels 1, 3, 6, 9, 12 and 15.

**W.P. Heavy Military Weapons:** Familiarity with military hardware, including grenade launchers, mortars, machine-guns, and mini-guns.

Damage: *Light or Medium Caliber Machine-Gun:* 5D6 S.D.C. per single round or 1D6x10 per short burst (12 rounds/bullets fired; counts as one melee attack) or 2D6x10+20 S.D.C. per long burst (36 rounds fired), but counts as three melee attacks. **Note:** Can only fire bursts.

*Heavy Caliber Machine-Guns and Mini-Guns:* 7D6 S.D.C. per single bullet, or 1D8x10 S.D.C. per short burst (10 rounds/bullets fired; counts as one melee attack) or 2D8x10+20 S.D.C. per long burst (30 rounds fired), but counts as three melee attacks. **Note:** Can only fire bursts and is so large, bulky and heavy that it must be mounted on a tripod or vehicle, or supported on a stone or other strong support to use.

*Grenade Launcher Rifle:* 1D6x10 S.D.C. per grenade to everything in a 10 foot (3 m) radius. Can only fire one at time, each shot counts as one melee attack/action. A grenade launcher may also be mounted on an assault rifle, but has a reduced range and ammo capacity; pump action.

*Portable Mortar/Rocket Launcher:* 2D4x10 S.D.C. per explosive round to everything in a 15 foot (4.6 m) radius, but each shot counts as two melee attacks.

Average Range: Light Machine-Guns: 3000 feet (914 m) and Heavy Machine-Guns: 5000 feet (1524 m). Grenade Launcher: 1200 feet (366 m), only 800 (244 m) when part of an over and under assault rifle. Mortar or Rocket Launcher: 4000 feet (1219 m).

Typical Payload: Machine-Guns: 100 short bursts (3000-3600 round belts). Grenade Launcher Rifles: 2 hand loaded or 24 grenade drum or six shot, pump-action on a rifle. Mortar: One hand-loaded round at a time.

W.P. Bonuses: +1 to strike at levels 1, 3, 6, 10, and 14.

**W.P. Military Flamethrowers:** Familiarity with different types of flame casting weapons used by the military and mercenaries.

Damage: 5D6 S.D.C. per burst of flame (counts as one melee attack) with a 01-75% likelihood of anything flammable catching fire.

Average Range: 60 feet (18.3 m).

Typical Payload: 20 fire blasts per single canister of fuel, 40 per double canisters.

W.P. Bonuses: +1 to strike at levels 2, 5, 10 and 15.

**W.P. Trick Shooting:** The ability to shoot firearms from odd angles and do trick shooting with reduced to no penalty. This skill was rare prior to the Wave.

1. Can fire a traditional two-handed weapon, like a rifle, one-handed without penalty (normally the shooter loses all strike bonuses).

2. Can shoot over his shoulder by holding up a mirror and using the reflection to aim. Reduce the bonus to strike by half.

3. Accurately shoot while riding a horse or a moving vehicle (normally a wild shot), but strike bonuses are half and a "Called Shot" is impossible.

4. Shoot accurately while standing on head or hanging upside down; all bonuses applicable at full.

5. Dodge, roll or somersault and come up shooting (normally a wild shot), no bonuses or penalties to strike; straight roll of the dice.

6. Ricochet shot! The shooter can bounce bullets, arrows, slings, and other fired projectiles (depending on the specific W.P.) off of one surface and angle the shot in such a way that the projectile ricochets/bounces off and hits a different/second target! Inflicts only one point of damage to the first surface and full damage to the second. Reduce bonuses to strike by half.

This can also be done with advanced or experimental energy weapons but the ricocheting surface must be mirrored or highly polished. Heavy weapons cannot be used.

## Wilderness Skills

**Boat Building:** This skill enables the character to build a variety of rafts, small rowboats, large flatbed boats, and canoes. A small raft (two man) can be made within 1D6+1 hours if the lumber or other suitable materials and tools are readily available. A large raft will take about 4D6 hours, a canoe, 2D6 days, rowboat, 4D4 days, large flatbed, 1D4x10 days. Time is doubled or tripled if trees must be cut down and wood prepared. Of course, the time can be reduced if several knowledgeable people are working on the construction. A failed skill roll means the boat has leaks. Trying to patch it will require 4D4 hours. **Base Skill:** 25% +5% per level of experience.

**Carpentry.** A fundamental knowledge of working with wood. The character knows how to prepare, treat, preserve and cut wood, recognize quality craftsmanship, repair damaged wood and wood items, and build furniture and articles (chests, boxes, chairs, tables, cabinets, houses, fences, frames, staves, utensils, etc.). **Bonus:** Adds +5% bonus to Trap Construction and +10% to Boat Building. **Base Skill:** 25% +5% per level of experience.

**Dowsing.** The ability to locate fresh water whether by using a divining rod or by more scientific and logical means. This is done through deductive analysis and knowledge of nature. The percentage number indicates the success ratio of locating fresh water. A person can roll once every melee to sense water, but must roll two consecutive successful rolls to locate the water. **Base Skill:** 20% +5% per level of experience.

**Fasting.** The ability to go for long periods of time without food. So long as the character has sufficient water, he can easily survive having no food for two weeks without physical penalty. Every day after that, the character must roll under the Fasting skill to avoid becoming weakened or sick. A failed roll means the following attribute penalties: -1 to I.Q., P.S. and P.P., -2 to P.E., -3 to Spd and -3 to S.D.C.; all are *temporary* and will re-

turn at the same rate they were lost with rest and proper food and water on a daily basis. The character can also go for two days without water and not show any serious effects from dehydration. **Base Skill:** 40% +3% per level of experience.

**Herding.** The techniques and methods of leading, directing and controlling cattle, sheep or other herd animals in a contained and relatively orderly group/formation/herd. Also includes keeping animals calm, basic care and feeding, how to tend the animals, recognize disease and illness, birthing and caring for young, gathering strays, pens and corralling livestock, and how to survive a stampede and regain control of the panicked animals. **Requires:** Horsemanship. **Base Skill:** 30% +5% per level of experience.

**Hunting.** The skill of killing and preparing animals for food. Includes a fair knowledge of animal habits and patterns, hunting techniques for baiting, trapping, and the construction of blinds and tree stands that conceal his presence and increase the chance of getting prey. **Bonuses:** +2% to Prowl, +5% to Track & Trap Animals, +5% to Skin & Prepare Animal Hides, +4% to Imitate Voices & Sounds and +10% to Cook game animals (rabbit, raccoon, pheasant, deer, etc.) only.

**Identify Plants & Fruit.** Training in the recognition of the many different types of wild plants and vegetation, and where they grow. The emphasis is on finding and identifying *edible* berries, fruit, vegetables, mushrooms, roots, bark and plants, as well as plants that have herbal and medicinal qualities (and staying away from poisonous ones). Roll for every 15 minutes of searching to see if the character has located enough edible food for a decent meal. Roll for every 30 minutes to see if the character has located a plant that could be used as a medicine, disinfectant, or herb. **Base Skill:** 25% +5% per level of experience.

**Land Navigation.** This skill enables the character to stay on course while traveling over land by means of observation and memorization. It includes mentally marking/recognizing geographic landmarks, estimating distance and movement, recognizing sounds, night travel, marking a trail and other navigation tricks. The player should roll once for approximately every three miles (4.8 km) traveled. A failed roll means the character is drifting off course by 2D10x100 yards/meters. Consecutive failed rolls means the individual does not realize that he's off course and continues in the wrong direction. **Base Skill:** 36% +4% per level of experience. **Note:** A group of average men can cover about five miles (8 km) an hour at a brisk, but relaxed pace through grassland, along dirt roads or pavement. Travel through dense forest, thicket or jungle at a cautious pace is about one mile (1.6 km) an hour. Heavy rain or snow, dense fog, swamps, and other environmental conditions will also reduce speed to a mile or less an hour. Map reading is done by looking at symbols (not words) and is -20%. The use of navigational instruments is not possible. Literacy and Math are *not* required for this skill.

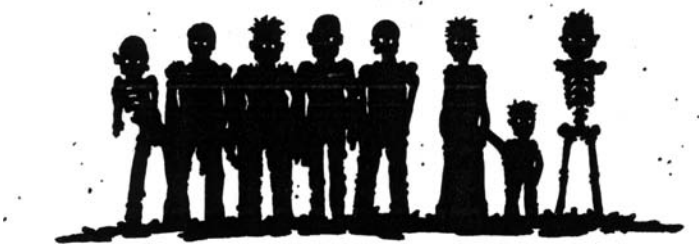
**Preserve Food.** Knowledge in the preparation of foods for storage and later consumption. Includes canning fresh fruit and vegetables, making jams and honey, drying fruit, vegetables, and herbs, drying meat and fish, plus various smoking, salting, and pickling methods. **Base Skill:** 30% +5% per level of experience.

**Skin & Prepare Animal Hides.** Training in the methods and techniques of skinning, tanning, stretching, and preserving animal hides as fur or leather. Adds a +5% bonus to the Sewing and Leather Working skills. **Base Skill:** 30% +5% per level of experience.

**Spelunking.** The art and practice of exploring underground caves. Spelunking is the knowledge of caves and cave types and their individual characteristics. This skill enables the character to navigate a cave or underground cave network, retain a sense of direction (including up and down), have a sense of the cave's depth, know how to make subtle markings and note formations to find his way out and to better navigate the cave(s) at a later date, as well as rock climbing. The Spelunker can answer questions about a cave system, such as what it is called (if it is a named landmark), where it may lead, how deep it continues, what type of rock it leads through and so on. This skill also lends familiarity with the correct equipment needed to go spelunking, and how to apply it. It is also the lore to recognize and identify various dangers, identifying the flora and fauna of cave systems and finding and climbing the best routes and direction. Unskilled characters wandering about in a large series of natural caverns have about the same chance of survival as unskilled climbers attempting to scale a major mountain without guidance or equipment. **Base Skill:** 35% +5% per level of experience. **Bonus:** +5% to this skill if the character also has Climb.

**Track & Trap Animals.** This skill enables the character to identify an animal by its tracks, scent, spore, and habits. The individual can also follow the animal's tracks and other signs. This means he can estimate how fresh the tracks are, what direction they are heading, whether the animal is lame, hurt or sick, guess at its age, and knows animal behavior and the basic habits and habitats of animals. *The first percentile number* indicates the character's tracking abilities and the above knowledge. *The second percentile number* indicates the character's ability at trapping animals by using and setting snares, clamp traps (like the iron bear trap), pits, nets and cage traps. **Base Skill:** 20%/30% +5% per level of experience. Tracking humans with this skill is also possible, but the skill is reduced by half. Disarming any traps meant for use against humans is done at half the character's normal skill ability for using animal traps.

**Wilderness Survival:** Techniques for living off the land, getting water, food, shelter, and help when stranded in wild forests, deserts, or mountains. Characters without this skill will not be able to stay healthy for more than a few days in the wilderness once their supplies run out. **Base Skill:** 30% +5% per level of experience.



# Epilogue

## Some parting words from the authors

When I was 10 years old my father let me watch a movie. It was Halloween night, and everyone was exhausted from trick or treating and gorged on candy. It was about ten at night and I was just about ready to doze off for the evening when my dad and my stepbrother came in and changed the channel.

“You’r going to love this,” my father said as he sat down on the couch next to me.

As the black and white movie began to play on the small screen I was quickly becoming bored with it when I heard something emanating from the TV.

*“They’re coming to get you Barbara!”*

Immediately my attention was captured and for the next 2 hours, although it felt simultaneously like 2 minutes and 20 hours, I was a prisoner. I didn’t sleep a wink that night. Every shadow, every sound out in the windy Michigan night, and every creek in the house was one of the *living dead* coming to get me.

I was terrified.

Now, twenty years later, I hope that **Dead Reign™** brings you the same thrills and chills that I experienced the first time I was exposed to the worlds of the living dead.

– Josh Hilden

## A few more words

Of all the monsters conjured from man’s imagination, few are as terrifying to me as *zombies*. They are people like you and me, stripped of life and all the things that make us human. They have no fear, no compassion, no mercy. They do not tire. They do not sleep. They do not stop. You can’t negotiate with them, or bribe them, or intimidate them. They just keep coming, relentless in their mission to catch and devour you. And when they do, you become one of them.

The worst part may be that a zombie could be anyone; your neighbor, your best friend, or a member of a family. If your own mother were coming at you with that empty, hungry look in her eyes, could you really pull the trigger? Or, would you hesitate, wondering if there was some part of her left inside? That hesitation could cost you your life, yet it might also save you from many sleepless nights to come.

The important thing to remember is that this is just a game; a fantasy. Zombies aren’t real. You and I will never be faced with a grim choice like the one above. We live in the real world. Sometimes, though, it’s fun to escape to a dark fantasy world and let our imaginations run wild. I hope you have fun with this game. I have.

– Joshua Sanford

## From the mind of Zombieda

When Josh Hilden brought the idea for **Dead Reign™** to me, I loved it. I loved the premise that it wasn’t the meek who inherit the Earth, but the dead. The walking dead. *Zombies*.

I loved the idea that mindless, savage zombies would reign over the planet and humans would be forced to hide in the shad-

ows. Yet *hope* still existed. Rather than cowering in terror, human beings strike back, vowing to retake the world – their world – for themselves or die trying. Epic. The stuff of legend and role-playing.

Palladium has done a number of post-apocalypse books. The end of the world, the fight for survival, the challenges of the brave, new world, post-apocalypse, is visceral, exciting, and heroic. Add *zombies* into the mix and, well, it’s something even more eerie and bizarre. Like I said, I love it.

Josh originally envisioned **Dead Reign™** as a small sourcebook for **Beyond the Supernatural™**, but I immediately saw it as much more, an entire game of its own, maybe even a whole new game series with more sourcebooks to come.

Josh and his buddy, Joshua Sanford, spent most of their spare time after work getting their ideas for **Dead Reign™** on paper for several months. We previewed their original concept in **The Rifter® #40** and got excited and positive feedback from our fan base. Gamers, it seemed, can’t get enough of zombies, and clamored at the idea of Palladium Books publishing a zombie RPG. I had artists *Nick Bradshaw* and *Amy L. Ashbaugh* start work on new zombie art, told Josh and Joshua to expand their ideas, and we announced the **Dead Reign™ RPG** as part of our release schedule for 2008.

I took that premise and those ideas and recast them into the book you hold in your hands now. An amalgamation of ideas from many sources and the wicked imaginings born from a fascination with the walking dead that seems to have existed among humans since the beginning of time.

Some people might tell you that it’s all been done before. And besides, how much can you say about zombies? They’re just animated dead, right? *Wrong*. Zombies are horrifying yet fascinating monsters that lurk somewhere in the subconscious minds of every person on Earth. Somehow, zombies capture our imaginations on a primordial level and don’t let go. They beg the questions, what if life after death is a nightmare, and how do you kill a monster coming to get you that is already dead? There is something that goes beyond frightening about the idea that your mother, father, brother, buddy, priest or neighbor next-door could reawaken as a shambling fiend that wants to kill you. Or worse, wants to turn you into one of the walking dead too.

I hope we were able to capture the creepiness of zombies and the horror of the unknown. I tried to take the approach of asking every question I could think of about zombies, and answering it. Yet at the same time, leaving the subject open for more questions, conjecture, fear, and sourcebooks.

Ultimately, I hope you find **Dead Reign™** to be a compelling addition to the Palladium Megaverse®. I hope you find the weirdness, twists and turns exciting and fun to play. Most of all, I hope you find hours and hours of fun traveling into the zombie filled ruins of our lost cities, slaying those who have already died, rescuing the living, and reclaiming the planet for human-kind. All in the comfort of your own home. Ah, the beauty of role-playing games.

Unleash those imaginations and game on.

– Kevin Siembieda, *Writer, Game Designer & Publisher*

THE ONLY  
GOOD ZOMBIE IS  
A DEAD ZOMBIE!

bradshaw  
2008

# The Rifter® Subscription

*The Rifter®* is your doorway to unlimited imagination and numerous Palladium role-playing worlds. It offers new heroes, powers, weapons, magic and adventure for your games. It presents new villains, monsters and dangers to battle, and new ideas to consider.

It helps you unlock your imagination by showing you what gamers, just like *you*, have created. That's right, many of the articles and source material are written by ordinary gamers and fans like *you*. Other articles are by freelance writers and staff.

**The Rifter® is made for you, our fans.** Each issue presents unofficial (and sometimes official) source material, adventures, characters, monsters, villains, powers, weapons, equipment, ideas and fiction for **Rifts®**, **Chaos Earth™**, **Splicers®**, **Beyond the Supernatural™**, **Heroes Unlimited™**, **Ninjas & Superspies™**, **Palladium Fantasy RPG®**, **Nightbane®**, and/or any variety of other Palladium games and world settings. It's also a place where we test new ideas, and showcase new games, like *Dead Reign* and the upcoming *Mechanoids® Space*.

It is also a way to get the latest news, coming attractions, and sneak previews of upcoming Palladium products, events and secret projects.

## Sourcebook

As a **sourcebook**, each issue of **The Rifter®** presents optional and/or official source material for a variety of Palladium's role-playing settings – **Rifts®**, **Phase World®**, **Palladium Fantasy RPG®**, **Heroes Unlimited™**, **Nightbane®**, **Beyond the Supernatural™**, and other titles such as **After the Bomb®**, **Ninjas & Superspies™**, **Rifts® Chaos Earth™**, **Splicers®**, and others. Every issue includes material for 3-6 different Palladium RPG lines.

## Magazine

As a **magazine**, each issue includes the latest news and goings on at Palladium Books, information on new product, our schedule of releases, convention appearances, special offers, and even sneak previews and extra “official” material for new Palladium games or sourcebooks.

## Talent Show

**The Rifter** is unlike anything on the market because it is a way for *you*, the fan, the unpublished writer and hopeful young artist to get published and break into the industry.

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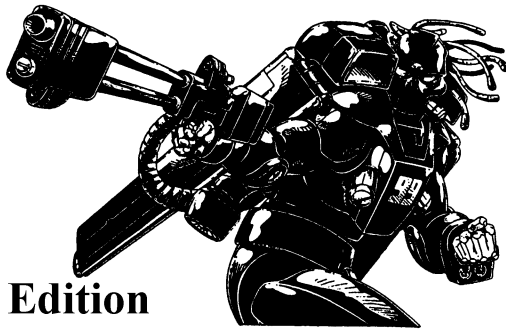
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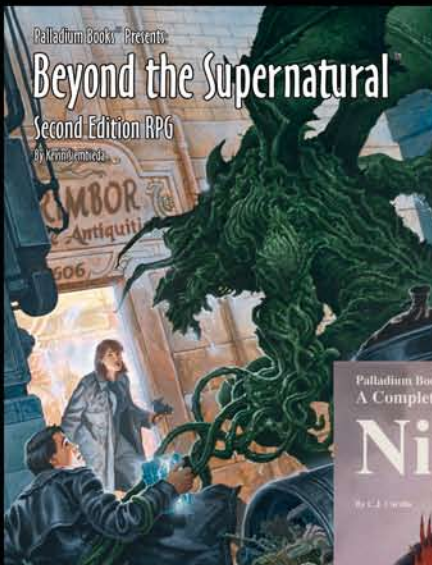
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